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N F O C F g r o u p

Attitudes Towards The Use Of Both Official Languages Within The Public Service Of Canada—VOLUME II

Qualitative Report

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1.0 Foreword

A. Background Information

Last year the Government of Canada renewed its commitment to Official Languages as a key element of Canadian society and in the Speech from the Throne, assurances were made that all Canadians should be able to interact with the Government of Canada in either official language. In support of this commitment, Treasury Board Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Communication Canada and Canadian Heritage undertook a research project regarding current attitudes towards the use of both official languages within the public service.

B. Objectives Of The Study

Official Languages policies and their effect on the public service have been scrutinized for many years in a more or less systematic fashion depending on the circumstances. The present study was undertaken in order to provide an exhaustive portrait of the situation obtaining at a specific point in time, both in terms of descriptive statistics (e.g. profile of bilingualism, unilingualism, etc.) but also, and more importantly, in terms of attitudes and opinions held by public servants about Official Languages policies. Specific objectives included the following:

- determine attitudes and levels of acceptance of Official Languages policies;
- assess the degree to which rights and obligations are understood and supported;
- assess the degree of correlation between knowledge of rights and obligation and degree of support;
- assess the level of understanding and commitment to the support of official languages minority communities;

- evaluate the level of satisfaction with the linguistic duality in the public service;
- establish benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.

Other objectives were more qualitative in nature (e.g., identify and assess levels appropriate to improving attitudes and augmenting the level of acceptance and use) and will be discussed in the qualitative section of the report.

C. General Design And Execution

The qualitative portion of this study included multiple lines of enquiry: individual interviews with senior executives; face-to-face employee focus groups across the country; and online sessions (using both chat and bulletin-board approaches). The specifics with respect to each of the modes of enquiry were as follows:

- Executive interviews were conducted with 30 senior federal employees. Respondents included French and English speaking individuals from across Canada. In addition, respondents were employed by federal departments and agencies of various sizes and geographic dispersion.

- Face-to-face qualitative comprising fourteen (14) focus groups, two each in the cities of Sudbury, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Vancouver, Moncton and Toronto were held. The recruiting process was set up to provide two different groups in each city, split according to mother tongue or preferred official language of the potential participant. Otherwise, the recruiting process was also intended to ensure the representation of roughly equal proportions of men and women, individuals in reasonable proximity to each other within the organizational hierarchy and so on.

- And finally, on-line qualitative comprised of chat sessions were held. These are the online equivalent of focus groups, where from five to seven participants and a moderator meet in a virtual facility and interact by entering questions and answers in the real-time text stream, which scrolls to accommodate new answers. Five such chat sessions were held: two in English, two in French, and one moderated bilingually. The sessions were held on February 25 (A1), 27 (B1), 28 (C1) and on March 5 (G1 and H1). Twenty-eight participants took part in these sessions, generating some 16,000 words. Additionally, bulletin boards, consisting of virtual meeting places where participants, often 15 or more in one session, and a moderator

> log on at their convenience over the course of a few days (often 5) were held. In these sessions, participants reply asynchronously to the questions that have been launched by the moderator, their messages forming discussion "threads". A total of six bulletin board sessions were held: two in French, two in English, and two bilingually during the week of March 12 through March 19 (with a break for the intervening weekend). Eighty-six participants took part in the sessions, generating some 65,000 words.

The reader will note that qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively projectable measures. Due to the sample size, the special recruitment methods used, and the study objectives themselves, it is clearly understood that the work under discussion is exploratory in nature. The findings are not, nor were they intended to be, projectable to a larger population. Specifically, it is inappropriate to suggest or to infer that few (or many) real-world users would behave in one way simply because few (or many) participants behaved in this way during the sessions. This kind of projection is strictly the prerogative of quantitative research. In short, the number of participants who behaved in one way or another is not relevant to this qualitative exercise.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Official Languages General Awareness

Participants note, and we observed, that information about the Official Languages Act filters down to employees, sometimes slowly, sometimes incompletely, and sometimes not at all. The lack of comprehension and awareness seems particularly evident insofar as the sections of the Act pertaining to official language minority communities and language of work.

> *... It seems that very little regarding this Act filters down to all employees, especially those who may not be impacted by the policy on a daily basis. (Group I1)*

Although some participants appear well versed in aspects of the policy (including the section on minority language rights), they invariably work in affected sectors (Treasury Board, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Translation Bureau).

> *I echo (...) and (...)'s points. We are also bound by Section 41 of the Official Languages Act to reach out to English and French minority communities to ensure they are being served by our programs and services. (Group K1)*

> *The Department has adopted a departmental policy on this subject, but we fully realize that the language rights of the public are not always well understood by the managers and employees, whether they work in headquarters or in a region. (Group K1)* [unofficial translation[1]]

Otherwise, we were able to gather some information relative to awareness of component aspects of the policy, be they champions, training, and so on:

[1] *Translator's Note*: The language errors in the French comments seem to have been carefully transcribed into this report (as have the errors in English in the English comments). I cannot duplicate them in the translation, but they may be significant. For instance, on page 49, one person's comment about the need to speak and write good French contains basic errors in French. Bilingual readers may want to refer to the French originals for the "full flavour" of these comments.

2.2 Awareness of Official Languages Champions

Language champions appear to have little visibility among employees.

As far as I am aware, we have a designated person to refer any calls we receive where the caller is speaking French, so I would say he is the Official Languages Champion. (Group I1)

Yes, I am aware that there is an Official Languges Champion in the Department but I don't see a significant impact. At best Official Languages communications from the Departmental Champion are probably deleted by employees without having been read. Most employees here don't care about Official Languages policies....it seems that it is only the francophones who feel that the Official Languages policies are important. A big challenge for any champion to try to tackle! (Group K1)

2.3 Awareness of Official Languages Training

In general, respondents are not convinced that increasing language training within the public service would make the use of official languages more equitable. Many expressed the view that language training is currently available to all those who want it. However, some Francophone respondents noted that there is a waiting list for those who wish to learn English, again there is a sense that Francophones are at a disadvantage.

A related view expressed is that any additional money would have a more positive impact if put into the school system where it could be used to ensure children learn both languages. It is seen as a waste of resources to spend limited funds providing language training to older workers nearing retirement.

A small number of respondents agree that increased language training would increase the use of both official languages. However, they qualify this by noting that in order for increased language training to have a positive impact certain conditions would have to be met:

- Individuals would have to be encouraged to practice what they've learned.

- Different goals for language training would have to be established. Currently, the perception is that the goal is to pass the language test. The goal should be to learn a language.

The overall message is that there is a sufficient amount of language training available to those who want it. Any additional resources would be better spent on junior staff and in the school system to ensure children know both official languages.

Otherwise, the attitude of employees on Official Languages training appears to cluster under four headings: fear, satisfaction, insufficiency, and the need to maintain currency.

Fear: Participants who have not experienced language training think it might prove to be a stressful and unpleasant experience, perhaps because language training seems associated currently with job security and the need to succeed.

> *I have never been on language training with the gov't. I imagine it would be stressful, away from home & feeling that one must pass the test - as it means so much for a career. (Group D1)*

> *I have not been on language training with the government. However, I have heard that unless you have some previous experience it can be quite demanding and stressful. (Group D1)*

Satisfaction: By contrast, those who have undergone language training have generally found the experience positive and enriching.

> *Yes, I did take two years of french training from PSC back in the late 80's. I found the experience positive, in that I found it much easier to learn french there than at high school. It was easier because the material was better and the teachers were french. Most of my teachers at school were english with fluency in french. I, like (...), had a tough time with keeping up with the rest of the class. Most of the others had either french spouses or their children were in french emersion and were able to practice outside of class hours. (Group D1)*

> *I went on language training to get my C's and it was one of the best opportunities that I have been given since working in the Public Service. It was quite the challenge to get my level C in french speaking as I had to start my training right from the beginning-block 1. I thought the class sizes could have had fewer students but overall it was a great experience. I know that if I had not been given the opportunity to go on language training and get my french levels I would not be where I am in my career right now as it seems that all of the positions in my field are identified as bilingual imperative. I think I got lucky 3 years ago when the job I*

applied for was bilingual non-imperative and it's unfortunate that more jobs are not identified as such so as to provide opportunities to others. (Group I1)

Insufficiency: Participants complain, loudly and repeatedly, throughout these sessions, that a failure to provide adequate support for the Official Languages policy is the root cause of any problem. This lack of support — in training slots, in resources, in back-up personnel, in training for anticipated rather than current requirements, and in the provision of sufficient tools — impedes the implementation of the policy both directly and indirectly, the latter by conveying the message that the policy has lower value (and priority) than achieving other goals.

For more years than I care to remember I attended night classes in French (from the French faculty at the local university and then from the Public Service Commission). A few years ago I did a three-week immersion course, which was a great experience. More recently, I participated in noon-hour French classes once a week. The night classes were a challenge because they occurred after a full day's work and were on my own time. Also, the training took place downtown, a 20-minute drive from where I work, which added considerably to the time I was away from the office for the noon-hour class. Often the demands of work prevented me from going. You really have to be dedicated to learning French here, because they don't make it easy. The commitment is just about all yours--not the organization's. (Group D1)

Some participants feel that their burden in the effort to become bilingual is greater than that shared by their employer.

I began taking French classes similar to (...) in 2000. I take three courses each year and am now enrolling in level 4b. I have enjoyed this experience as I would very much like to become bilingual. I feel that there is a professional ceiling that I can not break through until I obtain my B's. As I mentioned I have enjoyed my courses however I would prefer to go on full time language training as my current training is taking quite a long time. In addition, I am frustrated with the current language training policy. As I am in a unilingual English position, I am penalized for taking French training during office hours. I am required to work additional hours each week to make up my time. I feel that this is a deterrent for many especially when we are permitted to take other work related courses during office time. (Group I1)

If training money isn't provided, then the policy is starved. (Group G1)

Maintaining Currency: Participants sometimes urge that language training must be ongoing to be successful.

> *I have already taken training in the past, and I am still in language training. That is very well, but the problem, when one lives in a unilingual French region like Quebec City, is that a great deal of effort is required to practise. This training should be ongoing. (Group E1)* [unofficial translation]

> *If only to maximize returns from investments in language training, Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to implement more frequent and more recurring currency testing.*

2.4 Official Languages Career Impact

Participants were asked what impact the Official Languages policy has had on their career.

a. Unilingual Participants

Unilingual participants, often Anglophones, feel that their status has, or will, hamper their chances for advancement. For some, this recognition seems coloured by resignation tinged with some bitterness at an unjust treatment because of a trick of fate: being born in a unilingual area.

> *Personally,I think it is great to have bilingual staff who can serve the public. Unfortunately, for me, I am incapable of speaking French fluently - even after highschool & university attempts. This has frustrated me in obtaining career oppotunities in the dept. I can never obtain a posting in Ottawa or Charlottetown, because of this problem. I feel that those who live in predominately English areas,have their career paths stiffled by the requirement to be bilingual.There are cases where it is really not needed when so many others are bilingual. However, that is the reality we must live with. (Group D1)*

> *I feel that the policy limits my career opportunities since one must be bilingual in order to move up the ladder even if we are not a designated bilingual area. (Group D1)*

> *Absolutely, if I am not able to attain my bilingualism, there is no way that my career will move forward. Gee I guess this means that if you are english, you are*

> *doomed to be repressed by the public service/government for your entire career. This of course is extremely unfair and bias, it makes you think that because you are not bilingual that you are not worthy of a promotion. Does being bilingual make you a better employee? It just saddens me, that we have such a messed up government, who does know where true value lies. (Group I1)*

> *As and anglophone in the NCR, personnally, I feel the policy has held me back from promotions. This seems to have changed a little over the past few years and they have made adjustments to position language requirements to accomodate my skills. (Group I1)*

b. Bilingual Participants

Successfully bilingual participants (often Francophones), conversely, recognized that their bilingualism (often obtained on their own rather than through language training) had helped their progression in the public service.

> *Certainement, comme tous les qutres, j'occupe et ai occupé des postes désignés bilingues. Ceci ouvre la porte à plusieurs opportunités. (Group F1)*

> *When I first began in the public service, I occupied bilingual positions. My third language (Spanish) helped on my arrival in the public service. The positions I coveted over the years were all bilingual. I think this was an advantage in some cases, because the appointments were bilingual imperative. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

c. Other Impacts/Other Dimensions

The participants in our sessions reveal that their frame of reference for thinking about and discussing Official Languages is often complex and intertwined with other high-involvement issues such as fairness, taxation, and politics, making it extremely difficult to address one issue separately from the others.

> *... The policy has stirred many feeling from pride to disgust. A person may converse to a fellow employee or a friend in any language they choose. I beem with pride knowing that I live in one of the worlds most culturally diverse countries but shake my head knowing that the founding nation is dealt with so unjustly. This*

policy has caused many hardships for many across this country. Even though we talk about the work place enviroment this policy is far reaching. Because french is supported in the work environment effects the way we communicate to other nations. I know of companies who refuse to trade with Canadian companies due to problems in miscommunications french and english. They have dealt with other foriegn countries with more satisfying results. The other issue is as a tax payer. The money this country could save by choosing one language. (Group D1)

I have never been on language training. I would probably have enjoyed french training because it was always my favorite subject all through school and I would have picked it up quite quickly. I thought that I would have liked to take the training until the language issue turned me off. The government pushed the bilingual issue so much by making everything have to be bilingual that I kind of turned off even taking french when I would have probably enjoyed it. (Group I1)

As I go through these questions it becomes harder to keep focused to the work enviroment. We should have only one official language. At work, speak what your comfortable with as long as no one is else is offended. If they are you use english. (Group D1)

As usual, it is almost always the French people who make the effort of speaking English. (Group E1) [unofficial translation]

It seems clear that some segments of the employees have no stake in the success of the policy or the Act and will resist its implementation.

2.5 Official Languages: Minority Language

a. Minority Language Communities

Effectiveness Of Implementation

Comments made by a number of participants in both the on-line and executive interviews demonstrated some misunderstanding of the Policy with regard to Minority Language Communities. The character of this misunderstanding extends into the meaning of the term, as well as the *policy's spirit and intent vis-à-vis these communities. Among the many* things we heard about this aspect of the policy, the following stand out as some of the more revealing:

- For example, some confuse Minority Language Communities with other linguistic groups, i.e. those that speak languages other than English or French.

- Others participants reported that their department does not develop policies or initiatives -- they provide services to the Canadian public.

- Other respondents indicated that the policies and initiatives developed by their department do not impact Minority Language Communities and so this aspect of the Official Languages Policy was not relevant.

- A small number indicated that everything was bilingual, again indicating that many misunderstand the Minority Languages Community aspect of the Policy.

- Participants sometimes feel that producing materials in both languages or otherwise satisfying the needs of the public is sufficient to meet the requirements of the policy.

- In the view of one informed participant, most departments feel that minority language communities are the responsibility of Heritage Canada.

For a small number of departments, there are indications that Minority Language Communities are taken into consideration more at the regional level than the national level. Possibly because there is more awareness of the existence of these communities at the regional level, they tend to get lost at the national level because of their small size and geographic fragmentation.

b. Obstacles

The most significant obstacle to effective implementation or improved implementation of this aspect of the Policy is lack of familiarity with the Minority Language Community provisions. Without a clear understanding of the Policy and of the implications for Minority Language Communities, senior policy makers cannot be expected to fulfil the requirements of the Policy.

Obstacles cited by respondents familiar with the Minority Language Community aspect of the Policy include:

- Expectations on the part of the groups. Minority Language Communities, according to one interviewee often expect more than federal departments are able to provide within their budgets and mandates.
- Groups are fragmented. Groups are spread across Canada and often don't have similar needs.
- The environment in most regions is Anglophone so it is difficult to get funding to provide services to or develop initiatives with (Francophone) Minority Language Communities.

c. Best Practices

Respondents that were familiar with the Minority Language Communities aspect of the Policy were asked to identify elements of their department's approach that work well. Respondents identified the following:

- Reviewing and adjusting he department's approach periodically to ensure that the department is meeting its objectives and obligations.
- Approaching minority language communities very proactively, with extensive follow-up to assist communities in obtaining the financing they require.

Collaboration with other departments is engaged to make sure communities are able to implement projects.

- Seeking input and cooperation with minority language community groups in developing programs and initiatives.

2.6 Official Languages: Service To The Public

As was the case with other major aspects of the Act, the provisions about service to the public were characterized by varying degrees of conviction and ignorance. Generally, respondents tend to believe more in the performance of their department than they do in the *need* for services in both languages. Consequently, there is a strong tendency to presume that departments deliver, and a varying tendency to question the need in some areas. Most participants concur, however, with the Government's policy of communicating to the public in both official languages. The detail with respect to awareness around service to the public and related topics is as follows:

a. Awareness

Participants generally seem to know and understand the Official Language policy in terms of service to the public. This aspect is generally the first and primary provision cited as a definition of what the policy entails. Nonetheless, there appear to be some misconceptions and simplifications that may hinder the aims of the policy. Occasionally, participants link language of work to service to the public. In these moments, language of work is directly related or proportional to whether the employee's position requires dual language transactions with the public. Some of the definitions of the policy provided by public servants included the following:

> *To be able to work in one's preferred language, and that people can be served in their preferred language. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

> *I believe the Official Languages Policy is that everyone has the choice of which language they want to be served in or work in. As federal public servants, the Official Languages Policy states that you will serve the general public in the language of their choice - French or English. (Group F1).*

To be able to obtain information in one's preferred language. To be able to work with tools in one's preferred language. However, I do not think that this means that I can work in my preferred official language if there is no work to be done in that language. (Group F1) [unofficial translation]

This means that a Canadian citizen who wants to obtain a service should be able to receive service in his/her mother tongue (English or French). Thus a federal employee working in service to the public should be bilingual (English and French). (Group J1) [unofficial translation]

b. Implementation

Despite some acknowledged gaps, participants feel that their department provides services in both official languages, where warranted. With that said, however, there also appears to be considerable confusion about the specifics of the provisions concerning service to the public, and about how these provisions may be implemented.

We meet the needs of our public well with respect to basic inquiries and complaints - especially since we can draw on the expertise of bilingual employees in head office. Yet, if we were to provide all the services from our own unit, we would not be able to provide comparable services in French, as we can in English. Documentation is available - but expert explanation and discussion/debate is not. (Group I1)

The general public is usually well served in both languages throughout the country. Service in the second language does not always come as quickly as in the majority language, but in the end you always find someone who can answer. On the other hand, it is a little more difficult to always provide all the services to (...) in both languages. A great deal of effort is made, but in the West it is hard to find resources to provide services in French. (Group J1) [unofficial translation]

Our reception always greets people in both French & English. I feel that we do a good job & reception would obtain a bilingual colleague if there was a language problem. We have many cultures represented at work & so can usually find someone who speaks the language. (Group D1)

We have one bilingual imperative position in our office. It happens to be in my work unit, the receptionist. When she is away from the office I am required to replace her with temp help. It's difficult to train someone to be able when there only here for a day or two. Our unit also consists of other ee's who are not bilingual but are responsible to cover for the receptionist during breaks. Responding promptly to enquiries from the public is an important goal of the department. All employees take seriously the importance of providing correct information and taking ownership of enquiries. Bilingual service is not available

> *100% of the time. Systems are in place to try to have the service available but if the receptionist is away, other staff are away or PSC is away, there could be gaps in services in French. (Group D1)*

c. Summary

There seems to be a need for Treasury Board Secretariat to either clarify policy implementation points or to ensure that these clarifications are made easily available to public servants. As government and citizens move increasingly online in their transactions, such clarifications will become increasingly necessary. This migration to the virtual world may necessitate a review of all geography-based regulations, since transactions and work teams, to give but two examples will increasingly become virtual. The very technology that may make geography a secondary concern may also be the technology that allows solutions. Given the examples of other departments and the availability of telecommunications tools, it would seem desirable for Treasury Board Secretariat to provide a centralized clearinghouse of possible solutions to problem situations, a "Dear Abby" resource for employees and Official Languages consultants that would provide instant advice on problem situations.

> *Because of (...)'s significant French population, we are required to make an active offer of service in both official languages to people who contact us. That means that our receptionist is bilingual, As (...) noted, it is very difficult to find bilingual staff for that position. Because we are a research organization, we can produce our scientific publications in English only. There seems to be some confusion over whether that exemption also applies to material we post on the Internet. For now, everything on our Web pages in bilingual. In terms of general French capability, we have only a few people who are bilingual. Since our researchers are specialists in different subjects, someone who speaks French would not necessarily be familiar enough with the terminology of another person to be able to describe their work in French. This affects our media relations, because the researchers themselves are the spokespersons. (Group D1)*

These findings suggest that the service to the public aspect of the law is well understood and reasonably well delivered. Further, departments with a public-service mandate will be exposed to successful efforts to meet this aspect of Official Languages. In turn, use of Official Language resources and bilingual employees might encourage greater use of both languages for work in these departments. If correct, this hypothesis suggests that it might prove useful for executives to gain exposure to departments that do have a public-service element so that they can appreciate and experience a more

equitable official language workplace. This suggests the need for centralized planning tools across the public service, for instance, an enhancement to the PCIS tool to enable the identification and tracking of suitable candidates.

2.7 Official Languages: Language Of Work

We spent the greater part of the sessions asking participants about language of work.

a. Awareness

There is evidence of confusion between language of work policy and the service to the public policy.

> *As I stated yesterday, I believe this means that an employee in a designated bilingual position has the choice of which language he/she wishes to work with. It also states that the employee has the choice in which official language he/she wishes to receive their training, performance appraisals, personnel correspondence, etc. (Group F1)*

Another common misapprehension seems to be a belief in the unrestricted right to work in one's official language of choice.

> *You have the right to work in the official language of your choice. (Group D1)*

> *Employees are told that they can work in the language of their choice, but in reality, English is the working language in my work unit and it is not realistic to believe that we really have a choice. (Group K1)*

b. Impact On Departments

Even participants who felt that the policy was fully implemented wonder about its ultimate validity in meeting the operational goals of their departments.

> *This has a great impact on our area. This policy is implemented very well but going back to my previous reply it appears to be a flawed policy where both French and English speaking employees miss out on vital information. When a meeting is conducted in a bilingual format, not those that are simultaneously translated, but those meeting where have the presentations are in French and half in English you wind up missing half of the information unless you are bilingual. (Group I1)*

Francophones, themselves, often communicate in English. Reasons apparently vary: the need to ensure that they are truly understood by Anglophones whose French is not as good as their English; or perhaps even a fear that their French-language skills are not as good as their English.

> *The organization in the NCR region is 99% francophones, actually, only 1 person is anglophone. The regions with the exception of Quebec are all English. The problem is getting urgent messages out because of the translation requirement. Even the francophones, for the most part, write in english and send the documents to translation to have the french done. The story as I understand it is that they are not totally comfortable with their knowlege of french grammar and as you mentioned the urgency plays a role. (Group I1)*

The participants' comments reflected two types of applications of the language of work policy: passive elements (tools, for instance) and active ones (meetings and conversations).

c. Passive Elements

Although one senior Executive interviewed had felt that the passive tools (software, keyboards, etc.) were generally provided in the desired language, we receive indications that this is not always the case.

> *I believe that we meet all the requirements described by this policy. Where things go wrong is rather in the tools provided to the employees... (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

> *I think that can work both ways: perhaps the positions should require a minimum level of ability to read English, but on the other hand, I think that the department should make efforts to find reference sources in French and encourage research in French. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

In certain instances, it may prove more effective and efficient to change behaviour before changing attitudes. To that end, we suggest that Treasury Board Secretariat study the implications of requiring departments to automatically provide public servants with the required tools in their first official language, with a "negative option" to request work tools in the other language. This would help to diffuse French-language tools and hopefully lead immediately to greater equity by encouraging Francophones to use French by providing easier access to French tools. This approach would probably require (as recommended elsewhere) a more responsive PCIS.

d. Active Elements

As noted elsewhere, senior management and "critical mass" are a key influence on the use of language.

> *The official language of the Minister, his/her Aides and Senior Managers dictate the predominance of one language over another. Currently, we have a predominately English senior managment and Minister's office, so the reality is that almost all written communication is done in English. To say a staff person has the right to communicate in French in this context is naive. If a policy officer wrote a note in French, the system would have a hard time dealing with it and would likely have to get it translated – which would take too much time. The upshot is that the policy analyst would become side-lined. (Group K1)*

One issue raised by some participants is the English "flavour" of some industries or specialties. Research and science, for instance, are areas where English appears to predominate, even internationally.

> *The problem is not the use of the second language in oral communication, but the availability of the work documents in our language (French). Research is a world*

> *in which English is predominant; the references we use are mostly in English, and our positions are unilingual French. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

> *In my unit, the forms and the English terms are so complicated that when we use French terms, everyone gets lost, even the Francophones. It is much simpler and faster, because we must work with clients who are English-speaking or so used to working in English, as we are, that they also get lost. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

2.8 Barriers And Best Practices

As noted elsewhere, effectively unilingual senior management, insufficient resources, and ineffective central agencies are key barriers to better implementation of the policy. Participants also noted what could be termed an "Efficiency Imperative", something that tends to be reinforced by a strong element of the working culture.

a. Barriers: Resource Shortfalls

Participants report that having to do more with fewer resources is a systemic issue across the federal public service. This pressure forces all to select what objectives they will attempt to achieve.

> *Like everyone else, we are facing an increase of work & a shortage of staff. In our dept. we are facing a dramatic increase in health care needs in aging veterans - 80 yr. old +. We are in crisis mode but cannot obtain increased staffing to assist our veterans properly. The dept. has predicted for many years that this would happen. We are only funded for two nurses in (...) & I have worked alone for almost 1 yr., due to the illness of my co-worker. It can be quite overwhelming some wks. (Group D1)*

> *There are not enough people to do all the work. We want to change processes and programs, without necessarily having all the staff needed to do it in an acceptable time and without spending too much money. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

Demands on everyone's time necessarily exacerbate pressures to be efficient, further reducing the likelihood spending time on "extras": attending language training, expressing a complex thought in a foreign tongue, etc.

There seems little doubt that the Official Languages policy implementation has suffered from restraints and cutbacks as employees concentrate on core outputs.

> *... We have an Official Languages Coordinator in our (...) Centre here in (...). She would like to run awareness programs and promote french and french training but, like so many of us, she does two or three jobs so the french becomes low priority. She feels guilty. (Group D1)*

b. Barriers: The Efficiency Imperative

Efficiency trumps Official Languages. If "job 1" is to get the job done, managers try to manage by staffing on a non-imperative basis (and having a wider pool of potential applicants) and delaying language training, which removes the employee from their productivity stream.

> *I work in the area of Resourcing and I find that most departments/agencies would like to staff on a non-imperative basis however, there is a major push from above and from the central agencies to always staff positions 'bilingual imperative'. I find this limits the quality of potential candidates who could participate in a selection process and be considered for the many job opportunities. This could ultimately affect the quality of Public Service employees servicing Canadians. I've also noticed that for those employees hired on a bilingual non-imperative basis, Departments are reluctant to let these employees go on language training immediately as they are faced with mounting workloads and pressures that need to be addressed immediately. (Group I1)*

For some departments, compliance with various policies appear to have so bogged down performance that these are no longer delivered effectively. For some employees and managers, Official Language policies may be no more than one of those "administrative burdens".

> *Our biggest issues as a department are around compliance -- be it with our governing legislations, Treasury Board policies, our program Terms and Conditions, etc. Our Department's concentration on ensuring that we comply with these various bodies of policy has placed an administrative burden that is hampering our ability to effectively deliver our programs. (Group K1)*

c. Barriers: Effective Work Teams

Participants note that purposeful organizations deal easily and effectively with influences that are deemed to be disruptive, and this tendency too can be construed as a barrier to the assertion of one's language:

> *Another important factor is how many unilingual anglophones work in the unit. If there are a large number and someone speaks French a a meeting, it is seen as an inconvenience because you have to take the time to translate and it is perceived as 'exclusionary'. (Notice that its always assumed francophones can speak and understand English.) (Group K1)*

Some Francophones mentioned that although some participants in meetings had the ability, generally, of responding to their questions in French, other participants (often mostly Anglophones) might subtly (or not so subtly) ignore points raised by Francophones (since these could not be discussed in detail by the group, except at the cost of translation and time).

> *In my opinion, this part of the Official Languages Act is given little consideration in our department. I do not know any of our clients who does not speak English. Thus English is the favoured language in my workplace. However, I tremendously appreciate the fact that the manager who leads our bi-monthly meetings is able to answer my questions in French. But because most of the people in my team are English-speaking, there is almost total disinterest in the points I raise. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

Possible solutions might include alternative meeting models (buddy systems), but also alternatives: more responsibility for the bilingual members to act as de-facto translators, and a greater ability for them to be fluent in the technical language of their speciality.

2.9 Central Agencies

Some participants note that Canadian Heritage and Treasury Board Secretariat were intended to be the lead departments in the implementation of official languages policy but had, according to them, floundered in this regard.

> *As the official version states, it is up to certain departments (especially TBS and Heritage) to provide the leadership to enhance the vitality of the two languages. I myself work in the area of the official languages, and I have difficulty seeing the expression of this leadership. For example, try to find a section dealing with the promotion of both languages on the Canadian Heritage Internet site! Good luck! The TBS is not much better. The information on its site is minimal and disorganized, and any reference to the Journées de la francophonie that are being held at present has already disappeared from its site!!! That is the type of leadership we have! (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

> *It was declared that all EX positions would be bilingual CBC by 2000. The date is past, and it has been postponed once again, after 30 years of the Official Languages Act. It is frustrating. I would use the imperative designation for 100 per cent of the EX positions in bilingual regions. That way, the employees could speak either French or English. For all other positions, the higher the level, the more imperative positions there would be, and the opposite for the low levels, with free access to language training. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

> *In our contacts with our colleagues and supervisors and in communications in the government, we should in fact be able to communicate in the language of our choice, but we are still far from that goal. The policy is not well enough known, and managers and senior management are not (or hardly ever) made accountable on this subject, so the efforts are inadequate. Also, I think everyone should be aware of our collective power to make changes; if all the employees took the time to make efforts to improve matters, changes would gradually occur. I especially blame the central agencies and the leaders, but we are all a little to blame. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

It seems evident that in some respects, departments and Treasury Board Secretariat itself have failed to implement the policy as it should be. The result is likely to be lack of belief in the policy and, more importantly, a lack of respect for it.

> *I think the folks at the Official Languages Commission need to remind people why the Act and its policies exist. Usually their information campaigns just tell us what we have to do - about signage or greetings or service. They could foster a more positive attitude by changing their approach - in some way instilling us with pride in our bilingual heritage!! That being said - at what point do we stop trying to force the issue? I doubt there is any threat to losing the English language at work or at home - but without the legislation is there not a threat to the French language? (Group I1)*

Specifically, we must wonder whether the current mandate of Treasury Board Secretariat can be accomplished when both functions — promotion and policing — appear to be vested in the same administrative entity. We suggest that what is required now is a different way of thinking about the issues, a mindset that will favour promotion

over policing. Promoting values cannot, in our experience, be achieved without the willingness to risk new approaches, and such risk taking assumes the willingness to fail. We suspect that Treasury Board Secretariat is currently too concerned with enforcing and respecting its own many and often labyrinthine policies to be able to accept the risk taking inherent in changing attitudes. We therefore suggest that separate entities be created, if they do not exist, with separate mandates — one for policing and the other for promotion of Official Languages policies as language of work.

2.10 Best Practices

From the perspective of Official Languages, there are some mentions of what appear to be idyllic environments, where employees can truly work in their language of choice.

> *That is what especially impressed me when I arrived here. At any meeting, each person speaks in English and/or in French, and everyone seems to understand the language used. (Group K1)* [unofficial translation]

> *Unlike other departments where I have had the good fortune to work, here senior management has really stressed this aspect, and that has been felt down to the lowest levels. It is an important priority for the executive committee, and everyone makes it a priority. It must be said as well that we are a small agency...that makes it easier. (Group K1)* [unofficial translation]

There seems to be more research required to isolate departments that exhibit best practices and to identify more precisely how they have come about and how these practices can be cloned to other organizations.

> *I work about 65% of the time in English and the balance in French. In order to increase the percentage of time in French I sometimes designate days when the unit is asked to work entirely in French. (Group F1)*

> *be more indulgent toward non-Francophones; possibly let people speak and ask questions in their preferred language, but at the same time continue to speak French and to answer in French, specifying if there are questions in the other language (Group H1)* [unofficial translation]

2.11 Leadership Of Senior Managers

One of the most significant drivers of equitable language of work use — positively or negatively — seems to be the behaviour and attitudes of senior management.

> *I think it's a GREAT policy and more should be done to 'enforce', or should I say to 'enhance' bilingualism with the EX, ADM and DM category. Like I mentionned previously, my main clients are the Minister, DM and ADMs. If I had a job i.e. as a program officer or communications officer, (job dealing with the public) then I believe this policy would have more impact on me. (Group F1)*

> *I can say that I have no complaints about the Assistant Deputy Minister for the sector, because with my duties I meet him regularly, and we always speak French together, and my notes for him are also written in French, to make him practise. He manages it well, but he is in language training for the moment. Now that we have a new minister, all presentations must go to the Minister in both languages; before, we could send the English, and the French had to be available. In the weekly management meetings there are presentations in both languages, and if the presenter is French, the Assistant Deputy Minister asks his questions in French; that encourages people to dialogue in French. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

It seems clear that senior management and Ministers have a preponderant role to play in the day-to-day implementation of the policy, and it seems equally clear that Treasury Board Secretariat — were it able to have an impact with this audience — might achieve "bang for the buck". In addition to soliciting DMs and Ministers for their views on how best to achieve a buy-in (an initiative that we understand has already been effected by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages), we wonder whether a "buddy" system might not be implemented so that, for instance, Ministers might be paired with Deputies who are of the other language group. In the same vein, there may be other initiatives that would see, for instance, the installation in a thoroughly francophone community (Quebec City, for instance) of one or more headquarters of a government department. This move would have the advantage of providing senior management with the opportunity to use and practice their French. A similar move might be envisaged in a western city for Francophone executives.

3.0 Analysis

3.1 General Dynamics And Variables Observed

Having devoted some pages to a general description of the official language situation, our attention now turns to how and why participants perceive, understand, and "buy in" to the official languages policy. This section illustrates the degree to which the "dynamic" surrounding official languages is complicated. It seems illusory, in retrospect, to present any single "perspective" on official languages, or even general tendencies attributable to the communities of French and English-speaking public servants as a whole. As we will hope to illustrate, what the policy is, stands for and aims to affect is profoundly affected by a variety of things, both tangible and intangible, and presents a different face in different places.

Among the more tangible of these "things" are:

- **Geography**, both as it is manifest in distance (from Ottawa, for example), and by geographical circumstance (relative proximity or exposure to French-speaking Canadians, for example.) Based on our findings, we can assert that Canada presents not one or two, but several different and very distinct environments with respect to official languages that conform to geographical distinctions.
- **Demographics**, as is manifest in the proportions of the linguistic communities in any given location. Very evidently, the stakes, and therefore the whole of the logic of the official languages policy change dramatically in areas where one language predominates, as opposed to areas where the two communities are more balanced, for example.
- **Linguistic abilities**, as is manifest in an individual's ability to speak or understand the other language. Very evidently, the ability to understand, to speak, or to do both fluently has a dramatic impact on perceptions of the program, its impact, and so on.

While some of the more intangible of these "things" are:

- *One's understanding of the "letter" of the act*, and the degree to which the specific exigencies of the policy are understood. Despite the history of this

policy, there is a wide variance in how the policy is understood in specific, and of what the policy expects of public servants and their employer in general.

- *One's understanding of the "spirit" of the act*, and how this translates into personal imperatives.

3.2 Geography

There are at least two manners of describing how geography appears to have a bearing on how public servants view official languages: as a function of what we traditionally understand as Canada's East-West political dynamic, or, alternatively, as a function of relative proximity or distance from the political "center" of Ottawa or from Francophone communities. In either case, this variable's impact on public servants is generally the same. Participants' "buy in", or endorsement of the act's aims, their sensitivity for the act's potential impact on the "other" language group, and even their understanding of the letter and spirit of the act tend to decrease noticeably as we move further away from Ottawa.

This geographic dimension is visible in some of the attitudes and perspectives expressed, or in how they appear to change from location to location:

- Some believe that the policy was, in effect, designed and conceived in Ottawa as a way of bringing the issue of French to Canada's geographical extremities. Others, taking a simpler tack, feel that the policy is only relevant where there are French-speaking minorities of a given size.

- The imperative – the perceived need for such a policy – appears to be dramatically impacted by exposure to the "other" language group, and decreases in importance as participants are more distanced from the other community (this tendency being most pronounced among Anglophones). For several participants in BC, for example, the idea that the public service should cater to French-speaking people reflects an artificial imperative. For these individuals, this dictate has little to do with need (they argue that the public service would do better in BC to insist on Cantonese as a second language), and a lot more to do with "Ottawa's political agenda".

A more focused examination of some of the individual perspectives expressed about official languages suggests that we might expect additional impacts and implications from these geographical variants:

- The "stakes" in adhering to (or ignoring) the policy are apparently reduced in amplitude and personal relevance with distance from Ottawa. In general, participants further away from Ottawa (both literally and in terms of understanding or buy-in to the "issue of French") tend to attach less importance to compliance with the act. In some respects, this reflects a sense that the policy is more *institutionally* than personally relevant. Generally, the tendency in these more removed places is to see the policy as something that matters more for others. Arguably, in personal terms, and even in terms of impact on the working environment, the degree of one's personal or organizational adherence to the letter and spirit of the act is relatively negligible, particularly if the "other" language group is smaller or farther away.

- While somewhat of a generalization, we do see evidence to suggest that individual's understanding of the letter of the act – its broad aims and specific regulations – decreases in accuracy the further away we are from the political center of the country. Parenthetically, some of the more exaggerated views about what the policy requires of public servants were heard in these more distant areas.

- Concomitantly, we saw some evidence to suggest that participants' ability to articulate the aims of the policy – its desired outcome and general spirit – also decrease in cohesion as we move further away in this geographical sense. Whereas participants in other areas are more inclined to see these aims in personal or organizational terms (the policy being about promoting bilingualism or protecting rights, for example), it seemed generally true that participants from these more distanced locations were less able to even articulate what the ultimate aim or spirit of the act is. A core perspective, heard more often in Vancouver than elsewhere, is that the Official Languages Act aims only to *force* the public service into accommodating French-speaking clients and workers.

- Finally, it also seemed generally true that participants in these more outlying areas (those further removed either literally or figuratively from the center) were apparently more preoccupied about the sanctions surrounding the program than its rewards. Accordingly, complaints and the intervention of OCOL, and inspections, were more front and present in the preoccupations of participants. The notion of rewards associated with compliance with official languages, on the other hand, seemed a remote idea. Few mentioned the bilingual bonus, for example, in positive terms.

Ultimately, then, it seems important only to recognize that this geographical variable exists, and that it has apparent value as a general predictor of openness and buy-in toward the policy, the act, and the related regulations. This variable also suggests some elements of strategy, which will be explored later in this report.

3.3 Demographics – Proportions Of Minorities And Majorities

If we consider each city as a microcosm of the surrounding area, and look particularly at the proportional balance of French and English-speaking people in each location, it becomes glaringly apparent that the size of one group relative to the other has a dramatic impact on how the issue of official languages is processed. Not surprisingly, it would appear that the issue of official languages is processed – and lived – more favorably in areas where there is greater equilibrium between the two linguistic groups. Conversely, many things such as attitudes, openness, understanding and "buy-in" seem to degrade in relative terms as the population becomes more linguistically homogeneous.

From a macro perspective then, this variable suggests that the official languages "climate" would be more positive, or more productive, in areas such as New Brunswick or Ottawa than they would in Quebec City, Toronto or Vancouver. This was apparently the case, at least to the extent that our particular focus groups reflect on the reality of the surrounding city. Intuitively, it seems reasonable to postulate that there are wider implications in the perspectives, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of participants in linguistically mixed regions. Some of the following observations from the groups would appear to support this contention:

- Generally speaking, participants in these more linguistically mixed areas tend to know more about the origins and impetus for the act, and *tend toward greater consensus on this matter with the "other" community.*
- There seems to be a stronger tendency to describe the imperatives behind the program in more human, as opposed to institutional or political terms. In this sense, the imperative for adhering to the policy, and even the general need for this policy is more likely to be seen in light of local realities, and more likely to touch on personal values.

Accordingly, there are also more personal implications attendant in these more linguistically mixed areas:

- The stakes for adhering or failing to adhere to the policy are also apparently enhanced in personal impact. In these areas, we sense that participants have a keener awareness of how bilingualism can advance or hinder one's career, or how the organization's failure to live up to the spirit or intent of the policy can impact on the group's climate or culture. Not surprisingly, then, we also see evidence to suggest that adherence to the letter of the act is more important. Participants are also better able to articulate the spirit of the legislation.

- Participants from more linguistically mixed areas are also more inclined than others to seize on the benefits and rewards surrounding the legislation than the sanctions. While people in these areas exhibit no specific attitude about the bilingual bonus (a topic that generates mixed feeling across all groups), we do encounter evidence to suggest that the rewards are both more tangible and more personal – a given participants is more likely to want to become bilingual, if only because this has a more realistic likelihood of providing some form of tangible benefit for working life, for one's personal enrichment, etc.

Ultimately, what we see in this light seems straightforward – that there is an intimate relationship between exposure to linguistic duality and "buy-in" to the official languages policy. There is much evidence here to suggest that daily contact with people who live and work in the other language raises the stakes, makes compliance more worthwhile, and has a whole host of other influences that make the application of the policy easier. This finding too has direct implication for the development of a better communication strategy surrounding the program, which will be taken up later in this report. It also suggests that programs designed to move key people into linguistically mixed regions – a strategic personnel management policy, might have some beneficial impact (any such programs would obviously have to be voluntary).

4.0 Findings Specific To Individual Locations

4.1 General Dynamics And Variables Observed

Given that the focus groups were conducted in seven different locations, it is important to at least briefly describe how attitudes and opinions about the policy change from place to place.

4.2 Vancouver

The discussions (both in English) we had in Vancouver were remarkable, among other reasons, for their strident tone, and the generally recalcitrant and negative views that dominated there about the policy. The more vocal participants in these groups voiced considerable resentment about the policy, and refused to endorse many of the aspects of the policy that were unproblematic elsewhere. Within the groups themselves, we saw less of the consensus surrounding broad aspects of the policy than we saw in groups conducted elsewhere.

These conversations in Vancouver were troubling, if only because they appear to illustrate some of the dissent that surrounds the policy, and the difficulties that may lie ahead for Treasury Board Secretariat as it seeks to re-fashion the policy through communications. Moreover, these discussions also serve to illustrate the extent to which OL is a varied issue, and one that is perceived in profoundly different ways in different parts of the country. Lest we overstate the case, however, it is also important to recognize that much of what we describe here reflects the most extreme points of view, and does not diminish the importance or the existence of more moderate points of view. Some participants in these groups appeared much more moderate, and fundamentally more in agreement with the OL than the following section might suggest.

a. Vision or Perceived "Spirit" of the OL Policy

The comments and perspectives shared by most participants in Vancouver strongly suggest that the "spirit" of the program lies "in Ottawa and Quebec", and not in the "west". Typically, when asked to describe the ultimate aims of the policy, or what sort of "end-goal" it is designed to achieve, participants tend to evoke concerns and imperatives from elsewhere. The view of many participants is that OL reflects the concerns of Ottawa, the priorities of Ottawa, and the predominance of the French language among the domestic priorities of the federal government. In simpler terms, the OL policy is about carrying the political concerns in Ottawa about Quebec, language and separation to the rest of the country, or forcing federal public servants in the rest of the country to learn French.

What is different here, and in some contrast to the attitudes and perspectives shared elsewhere, is the noticeable lack of endorsement for basic aspects of the policy. As a case in point, even the dictates of the OL policy as it relates to service to the public were met with objections and dissent here, whereas they appeared to be more acceptable in most other groups.

In all of the discussion we had here about the source of the policy and its aims, one of several recurring themes is that the policy reflects little of the realities or the concerns of western Canada and western Canadians. Typically, participants pointed to the very different ethnic composition of Vancouver, and how this matches poorly against the dictates of a policy that prescribes French as the alternative to English as a language of service. Many participants pointed out that Vancouver and the lower mainland of BC is made up of many other ethnic groups, and that French is hardly the most prominent language among them.

This suggests that complaints about the policy are two-fold. On the one hand, it is seen to be fuelled by a set of preoccupations that are foreign to their immediate concerns and realities. In addition, this perspective would also suggest that some feel that their own concerns and challenges are not being heard.

b. Understanding of the Letter of the Policy

As was the case in many other cities we visited, participants in Vancouver demonstrated considerable ignorance about the stipulations of the policy. Most participants conveyed only a superficial understanding of how the policy speaks to language of service for the public, and even less direct or accurate knowledge about how the policy speaks to language of work. Given that Vancouver is, however, an "English" area for language of work, this latter aspect of their ignorance is perhaps not surprising.

The distinction, as we saw it, in the perspective of our Vancouver participants is that these participants tended to a greater degree of inaccurate understanding of the letter of the policy. More significant misrepresentation emerged in participants' discussion of what the regulations actually are. For some, the "right to service in French" extends to all departments, and all functions of the government, such that any person demanding to be served in French must be catered to.

Pursuing this discussion, it became clear that most of these participants tend to a rather exaggerated view of what the policy actually demands, and that this ignorance is at the source of some of the latent resentment we encountered, if only because it suggests an inflated sense of the burden that the policy places on individuals and work groups.

Part of this perspective extends into what participants in Vancouver had to say about the implementation of the policy and its impact on the working life of public servants. Here too, we see tangible repercussions attributable to a less than clear understanding of both the letter and the spirit of the legislation. These are visible in at least four distinct manifestations of attitude or perspectives about the issue:

- An ambiguous understanding of how bilingualism affects upward mobility in the public service. Despite their relative distance from Ottawa (their perceived locus of preoccupation about language), it seems apparent that public servants in this region are nonetheless sensitive to their career tracks, and more particularly to the qualities and qualifications that have a bearing

on their chances for promotion. In this broad concern, some participants exhibit varying degrees of awareness of how bilingualism affects upward mobility. It would appear that their colleagues who are in the upper echelons of the local hierarchy, and those that seem to be on their way there are having to deal with French in more pronounced ways. This awareness, however, does not appear to be accompanied by any explicit view of how, or why this should be the case. In this sense, then, some intuit rather than understand that their own linguistic abilities may have a bearing on their chances of moving ahead.

- Apparent resentment about how the policy is applied and enforced. In this larger climate of less than clear understanding of the motive or spirit of the policy, we should not be surprised that its implementation and enforcement is cause for concern and resentment among some participants. Of particular note in this context is the designation of "imperative' and ""essential" postings, the "bilingual bonus", and the process of OL testing and complaint investigation.

- Personal resistance to the perceived demands of the policy. Some participants feel that the policy is articulated in a manner to pressure civil servants to acquire spoken fluency, which is of course a logical extension of a policy that is understood to demand bilingual service capability of every department, local or otherwise. What is significant in this misperception, however, is how difficult a task this appears to be to participants, particularly in situations where there is little prospect of using the language in question. In addition, the feeling that participants *cannot learn* French is a common one here.

- Standards of progress or success defined as an absence of official complaint or sanction. Finally, this climate apparently is one where successful application of the policy is defined by many simply as a function of minimizing complaint or official sanction. This speaks to an attitude of avoidance.

It is important to recognize that these characterizations often reflect the more extreme points of view expressed in the Vancouver groups (and otherwise provide no sound basis for characterizing all western public servants in the same light), and the views of the more angry participants within each group. Some participants demonstrated more specific knowledge of the policy, and adhered to more moderate views about its impact and its importance. Some individuals, for example, took quiet exception to the recalcitrance of other participants, and appeared to uphold some of the principles behind the policy. Our exposé of these groups then is offered not as an indictment or even a characterization of the whole, but rather as a snapshot of some of

the stronger undercurrents of opinion that clearly exist in some corners of the country. Moreover, the perspectives here should serve to illustrate the ramifications of spotty communications surrounding the policy, the ramifications of the policy for locations where French is not a prevalent concern, and, most importantly, to illustrate the breadth and the extent of the task that remains before significant, national buy-in to the policy is achieved.

4.3 Quebec Groups

A total of four focus groups were held in the Province of Quebec, two each in the cities of Montreal (a "bilingual for language of work" region) and in Quebec City, where French predominates. In each city, we recruited a group of Anglophones and a group of Francophones.

The tone of these discussions was in remarkable contrast to those we had in Vancouver. Participants generally knew more about the policy, both in terms of its aims and its specific provisions, and also appeared to endorse these to a much greater degree. Workplace harmony, and the impact that language may have on the climate in the workplace was a concern of much greater proximity and importance to participants in all groups. At the same time, each of these groups belied problem areas of their own, and unique challenges for communication strategy. At the core, however, we can assert with confidence that these marked contrasts can be attributed to:

- Greater exposure to the perspective of the "other" language group;
- A much stronger and keener awareness of the spirit, letter and historical antecedents of the policy;

These two factors in turn have apparently had unique and tangible effects on the perspectives of both language groups, and how individuals perceive the stakes involved.

a. Vision or Perceived "Spirit" of the Official Languages Policy

If there was a single thing that might illustrate the core difference in perceptions of the underlying motives for the official languages policy in Quebec, it may be in how participants seem to be much more aware of the history behind it. This sense of history extends beyond knowing who enacted or amended the legislation to a keener sense of the historical and cultural imperatives that motivate it. Most participants in Quebec, in all four groups, concede that at its core, the policy is designed to redress historical inequities in the treatment of Francophones, and that the policy has a larger motive to re-entrench this language in the political and cultural fabric of the nation.

Seen in this light, it is also apparent that participants have a stronger sense of the importance of the policy. In turn, this historical view has a unique impact on how participants understand what the stakes are. While no exposé of our Quebec groups could be possible without delving into the distinct perspectives we encountered in each linguistic group, we can assert that there tends to be consensus between Anglophones and Francophones on the following:

- That the official language policy has, at its core, a role in the protection of linguistic rights;
- That the long-term aim of the policy is the preservation of French language and culture by way of enmeshing French into the mechanism of government. Additionally, and in important ways, both groups also *tend* to agree that the policy aims to *redress* historical inequities, to correct or adjust a current imbalance.
- That in Quebec, *"language is more than just a means of communication"*, which is to say that the issue here has importance and sensitivity that extends well beyond the logistical problems of how bureaucrats communicate among themselves or with the public.

On the other hand, and equally important to our understanding of the Quebec groups, we can also point out some areas of significant ambiguity and underlying incompatibilities of perspective between these two groups. These appear to center on

the vision of the ultimate end-goal of the policy and the distinctions that may be made between preserving rights and promoting linguistic harmony (which are not always compatible), and the means that may be reasonably directed toward these ends. There is also evidence to suggest that each group has different perspectives on what the "yardstick" for measuring progress should be. Not surprisingly, these differences can contribute to discord.

b. Understanding of the Letter of the Policy

If we compare how participants in Quebec understand and speak of the specific regulations contained in the Official Languages Act, it would appear that their knowledge is more complete in some respects, and just as spotty as elsewhere in other respects. Generally, Quebec participants were more knowledgeable about how the policy came to be, and what it aims to accomplish, but were otherwise just as likely to misconstrue the basic mechanisms such as "significant demand", and how language of work areas are defined. Interestingly, the impact of these shortcomings in understanding may be lessened, if only because participants tend to assume that the policy demands bilingualism of most everyone. In this light, then, the specifics seem more minor in importance and impact. Finally, we can assert that there appears to be a language-centric "spin" to how participants articulate the policy: Not surprisingly, the Official Languages Act is understood as being centrally concerned with how Anglophones deal in French, and not vice-versa. This perspective was most apparent among Montreal Anglophones, who seemed reluctant at times to even acknowledge that the act may speak to their right to work in English (some exceptions noted, however).

c. Views on the Implementation and Impact of the Policy

Generally, and for the totality of participants we spoke to in Quebec, the implementation of the policy seems to be less problematic than how progress and compliance are to be measured. On a personal level, it seems clear that most

participants are inclined to look at the climate in their workplace, and have a reflexive tendency to process this measurement on a day-to-day basis. In the longer-term perspective, however, it also seems clear that "progress" toward the ideal official language work environment is a much more daunting process, if only because of both groups underlying acknowledgement of the broad – the historical and the cultural – antecedents at hand.

When seen in this light, the barriers are apparently more difficult, and the measure of progress is more daunting. Assessing progress on the official language front has characteristics similar to the dynamic surrounding employment equity and how the public service deals with visible minorities – it begins to take on the dimensions of a moral and ethical imperative. Just as importantly, this perspective also suggests that fundamental indicators of progress may be more than simply the comfort levels and surface language abilities of both linguistic groups. Arguably, and when placed in this larger context, progress is arguably measured in change in attitudes, and also in compatibility of values.

For Francophones in Quebec, we see evidence in our discussions of a greater sensitivity to what they consider intrinsic inequities, manifest in their tendency to speak to socially and bureaucratically ingrained obstacles. The obstacles that they speak of appear more insidious and difficult to pin down, and must be essentially harder to objectify. Moreover, the stakes here are important: as was quoted previously, "language is more than a means of communication" in Quebec, and compliance with the Official Languages Act can tend to be equated with a measure of cultural survival, or linguistic rights.

It is in this broad context, then, that we sense that French-speaking civil servants are at once keenly aware of the risks and the barriers to the implementation of a harmonious civil service with respect to language. This context is perhaps at the source of the sensitivities on both sides of the language line to appearances, and to the "ins and outs" of compliance with the letter and spirit of the legislation.

d. Quebec Anglophone Groups

Quebec Anglophones, for their part, tend generally to recognize the same historical antecedents and culturally ingrained barriers to progress as their Francophone counterparts. To a somewhat similar extent, they also tend to see the official language dynamic as a function of how well they deal in French, and not as much in the reverse. Most of the participants we talked to vocalized or suggested that they found the Official Languages Act and compliance with its regulations to be very important. They tend to recognize the same stakes as their Francophone counterparts, but also convey a sense that compliance is essential for the harmony of their working lives. To most, having a second language in French is an ability that provides many assets. Finally, they too show signs of attributing considerable sensitivity to the visible signs of the language dynamic in their workplace, and report being very conscious of when and how each language is used, either casually, or in the official function of their work.

To be sure, the portrait we've painted of Anglophone Quebeckers seems to reflect their strong bilingual abilities, and it seems clear that not only has much of that attitude about language from these participants been born from a long exposure to both communities, but also from the fact that most participants were, in fact, bilingual. Two unilingual English-speaking participants stood out as exceptions to this general pattern, however, and their stories illustrate some of the specific and peculiar situations that can arise when language stipulations, posting and linguistic abilities don't match. Two prominent features emerged as common to these two cases:

- Each one felt that they had been promised an opportunity to work in their mother tongue, and each felt that that promise had not been upheld despite the official language designation of their position;
- Both felt uncomfortable in their situations, and that this discomfort was being exerted by way of social and peer pressure *despite* the official structure of their workplace, their job designation and so on.
- For one of these two, finally, it should be said that the critical aspect of "language of work" was the element of supervision. In this situation, the litmus test of actual "ability to work in the language of your choice would appear to be centrally related to the supervisor's actual ability to deliver supervision in the "other" language. While most people we talked to in this situation (both English and French-speaking) felt that they could ultimately

navigate the currents of language with their peers, failure to deliver on supervision was generally seen as a more serious failing.

Finally, it should be noted here that one of the more vivid impressions to emerge from our discussions with these individuals is about the weight of peer pressure, the impact of language on an individual's sense of self and place in an organization, and about how discomfiting it can be when people find themselves at odds with the surrounding pattern in this sense.

4.4 Other Regions Visited

We also conducted focus groups in other areas, notably in Ontario (Toronto and Sudbury) and in Moncton. In each of these places as well, we see evidence of unique language dynamics, yet ones that seem nonetheless to revolve around the central themes we have been speaking to so far: Participants' understanding of the letter and the spirit of the legislation, their perceptions of the stakes involved and the degree to which these are internalized for them, as well as other more external factors.

a. Moncton

The findings from the Moncton groups (which were, incidentally, well-attended, highly productive and warm in tone) suggest that language is both a greater preoccupation in New Brunswick in some respects, and a less dramatic one at the same time. One gets the impression that because both communities are of more equal weight (if not literally, then figuratively), participants have come to accept this dynamic in a more open spirit of negotiation and compromise, despite the existence of problems. Here, and as elsewhere, we also see evidence of a "spirit of accommodation" that values the benefit to the whole greater than the rights of a given individual, which is manifest in many Francophones describing a pattern of forgoing their language in favour of efficiency or the comfort of their English-speaking colleagues.

Generally speaking, the spirit of the legislation here, and its application are both coloured by an aim to goodwill, to fostering respect and tolerance, and the good of the organization as measured by fluid, non-problematic working relationships. Correspondingly, we tend to hear less about "rights" in this environment, and while participants seem aware of the larger historical antecedents to this legislation (and the intrinsic barriers to progress), one senses that these are very much less at the core of participants' preoccupation. This is not to say that language is unimportant (as the tone and energy of conversations would deny anyway), but rather that it seems to be important for different, more practical and more personal reasons.

If we listen carefully to the French-speaking perspective evoked in our conversations, it becomes clear that while sharing some sense of history and its relationship to official languages with their Quebec-based counterparts, there are important nuances here. While it would be a mistake to suggest that French-speaking participants in Moncton don't recognize the historical background or the gravity of the issue for the cultural survival of French, our conversations there do suggest that this is less grave a concern. The historical preoccupation, as it emerged, was more about how the force of history has led the two communities to two different realities. Francophones in New Brunswick speak of a keen awareness of their own bilingual abilities, and how these have been demanded of them over time. This community skill, as it were, has presented them with a sort of double-edged sword, empowering them on one hand, and bestowing them with a greater share of the burden of "getting along" with their English neighbors.

This dynamic, which is also visible in Northern Ontario, has unfolded as follows: The balance of demographics has historically demanded bilingualism of them, simply because the weight of the English-speaking community was too much to ignore. Over time, and as the French became increasingly bilingual, it also become relatively easier for them to accommodate English than it was for the English community to accommodate French. As such, many participants feel an unbalanced demand to exercise their English. This in turn has lowered the imperative for English speakers to learn French. In this sort of a dynamic, and particularly as these patterns are entrenched over time, asserting French becomes pitted against both a long-standing spirit of accommodation, and a "bucking" of convention. Finally, and to "cap off" a most

peculiar dynamic, the Official Languages Act comes to bear by prescribing bilingualism as an asset, and a pre-condition to promotion. In this final light, some participants in Moncton also recognize a sort of circle that transfers a strong measure of both the advantages and the burdens of language on them.

We also hear, and sense, that this dynamic poses insidious influences on how French-speaking participants in Moncton view their own capabilities. Clearly, the patterned accommodation of English is something that some recognize as ultimately self-defeating, and is clearly manifest in some personal feelings. Many French-speaking participants bemoan the degradation of the quality of their French over time, and are able to recognize this as part and parcel of the "Catch-22" in which they find themselves. This may contribute to evidence of considerable sensitivity about bilingual job postings, to the mechanics of the bilingual bonus, and to the logistics surrounding the use of English and French in official situations, among other things.

English-speaking participants in Moncton, for their part, speak in terms and of concerns that are remarkably evocative of the views expressed by their French-speaking counterparts. They too recognize many of the patterns described above, display a similar view of the importance of the legislation and compliance, and concede at least some of the systemic dynamics pointed out above. In some cases, they also acknowledge or admit to some of the "abdication" seen in them by their French-speaking colleagues.

On the whole, however, one cannot confront a discussion on this topic in Moncton and not be impressed with the relatively and tangibly greater degree of harmony of perspectives on the topic between the two communities. Ultimately, we may attribute this apparently greater harmony to the proximity of the two communities, their more equal weight within the larger whole, and the wider sense of shared perspective on both sides, and the means to the ends implied in the Official Languages Act. They seem a practiced lot on this topic.

b. Ontario

While we encountered unique perspectives and points of view in Sudbury, Toronto and Ottawa, none of these three cities escapes the broad pattern of dynamics described so far, or the telling impact of certain key indicators. These three cities are ultimately subject to similar patterns and impacts attributable to their sense of history, the vision of the aims or spirit of the legislation, how they would define the stakes, and so on. Keeping this in mind, we can then concentrate on the points of distinction relative to each location:

In many respects, what we heard in Sudbury was similar to what we heard in Montreal, except that frequently, the perspectives and the orientation of both language groups were reversed. This is less surprising when we consider that both groups are in similar situations, embodying small-scale minorities in a larger pool of the majority community. In other respects, we heard similarities between the views of Francophones here and those expressed by Francophones in Moncton. More specifically to both points of comparison:

- Anglophones in Sudbury betray a lack of knowledge about the specific exigencies of the official language legislation that was similar to what we heard in other cities where Anglophones are in a majority. In addition, we sense from them that the legislation is a lesser concern, and seen in light of a wider (national or Ottawa-centric) preoccupation that does not necessarily concern them directly. Not surprisingly, however, this latter perspective was more pronounced among unilingual English-speakers than the bilingual ones.

- Francophones, for their part, also exhibit some of the same reflexive tendency to accommodate English as their counterparts in Moncton. These participants tend also to be bilingual, and speak clearly of their tendency to abdicate their use of French in favour of group efficiency, or the comfort of their (more) unilingual English-speaking colleagues. Finally, the problems we heard about seemed more pronounced when they concerned supervision or communication through the organizational hierarchy, as it did when it concerned communications among peers.

Other groups in Ontario suggested additional nuances as described below.

The perspectives and opinions expressed in Toronto were similar to those heard in Vancouver, save for the absence of the degree of negativity surrounding the policy. Here too, we sense that the perspective of Anglophones is similarly disinterested, at least to the extent that they are less often exposed to the need, and given that this is an "English for language of work" area, not necessarily preoccupied with the negotiation surrounding the use of French by their colleagues. Also, as we might have expected, the perspective of French-speaking participants in Toronto was highly colored by their bilingualism, and the fact that they routinely work in English.

Finally, the Ottawa groups suggest that here too, we encounter a special geographical reality, similar to other areas in some respects and unique in others. Among other things, this city presents a unique collage of language communities, where Francophones originate from different areas (western Quebec, Northern Ontario, and elsewhere), and differing visions of the impact and importance attendant to each of these. Additionally, we may presume that the whole logic of the Official Languages Act and its regulations, particularly as they concern language of work are better understood in this region, if only because the dynamic is a common facet of every working day. Yet, we saw evidence that Francophones themselves recognize that they often abdicate their use of French, and still decry the decline in the quality of the French being spoken (failing, as it were, to see a relationship between the two). This would suggest that some of the dynamics seen elsewhere, notably the "spirit of accommodation" and the "efficiency imperative" may be just as strong in Ottawa.

Otherwise;

- Both communities of participants concede a decline in the use of French in Ottawa, although the Francophones tend to deplore it, whereas the tendency among Anglophones was to explain. For the former, one senses they feel that this is a normal function of the weight of English in the world, and the language's status as the dominant choice in business and science. For the latter, the decline tended to be seen as a by-product of lack of commitment on the part of Anglophones.

- As was the case elsewhere, both groups recognize that it is Francophones who are more likely to be bilingual;

- The French spoken by some native Ottawans (Franco-Ontarians) and some native West Quebeckers (from Hull and Gatineau) is quite different from any other French (as they all are). Like their cousins in Moncton, Franco-Ottawans speak a French that is spiked with anglicisms; they will often switch to English outright and generally speak it without accent, which is evidence of their general practice. The French of Hull and Gatineau natives tends to reflect blue-collar origins, and heavy components of "*joual*". A hypothesis emerges: The local French languages or dialects are a) hard to master b) spoken rather than written c) without much technical terms. As a result, Anglos trained in a classical French a) aren't understood and b) are assumed to be trying to act "superior" (ie, like taking on a British accent) and c) may be resented for speaking a better French than the native Francophones. This in turn may contribute to a dynamic where Anglophones' efforts are not reinforced.

5.0 Qualitative Segmentation

It seems clear from these sessions that there are areas for improvement. It also seems clear that there are best practices now occurring about official languages and their underlying values. Treasury Board Secretariat and other interested departments should conduct research to identify these positive models, to understand them better, to explore why they have come to exist and prosper, and how to promote their proliferation.

We also encountered other attitudinal types that foster and promote values antithetical to the cooperation and goodwill that could improve equitable use of official languages in the workplace.

Group 1

In our research, we encountered participants who volunteered that they would like to take language training or would like to perfect their second language skills but were prevented from doing so because of departmental or governmental obstacles, or were already in one way or another promoting the values of official languages.

> *Working in a bilingual environment has allowed me to improve my French-language skills. This will always be a plus in my professional and personal lives. (Group K1)*

> *Coming from the West Coast originally, I have really appreciated the opportunity to learn the other official language and use it on a daily basis, both with members of our unit and clients.*
> *I usually work in English but must also work in french about 40% of the time when dealing with clients, participating in french interviews as a boardmember, meetings, speaking with colleagues/subordinates etc. I did go on french language training about 3 years ago - got my C's and I make it a point to practice my french as much as possible. (Group I1)*

> *... In HR in (...) we have an individual who is bilingual and has made employees aware of the French classes available. Many people have taken advantage of this. (Group D1)*

> *(...), the PSC is not supportive of ensuring this comes about. I can assure you. I use my own $$ and own annual leave to take French courses... (Group G1)*

> *Privilege: Coming from BC orginally, the chance to make even small steps in French is enriching. (Group C1)*

We believe that these individuals and others like them should be encouraged for embracing the values of multilingualism. This might require the establishment of a functional database of government employees (PCIS with email fields for all government employees) to identify those employees.

It seems that this provides a starting point for identifying how these employee work teams got started, what makes them bilingual, what makes them successful. More importantly, it seems likely that research could start with them to identify any characteristics that could be exported or migrated to other work teams. For instance, could these work teams, already bilingual, be used as staging points for newly-minted bilingual managers or employees to perfect their skills, and learn to use their second language in a supportive environment? Could these bilingual units be used as refresher stages, to ensure that employees use the language skills that they have worked so hard to acquire?

Group 2

The most obvious are those who refuse to make an accommodation to bicultural society.

> *I work in English. Way back I did take language training and attained level B's. However, when I tried to use French in the workplace Francophones would switch to English and refused to speak French to me. The Quebec Regional office even wrote a letter to my boss at that time asking that a francophone be assigned to deal with them as they did not feel I had a good working knowledge of the language. As, I mentionned, I am a minority in the office. I can understand French to some degree so meetings are bilingual in format and the working language of the office is bilingual with staff switching back and forth between English and French. I quite often receive calls in french and answer them in English in most cases. When the individual calling does not understand my response(which rarely happens)I usually turn the callover to one of my staff. (Group I1)*

> *Messages (written correspondence) from Quebec Region staff are generally in French and we either have to ignore them, guess what it means or find $ to get them translated in English. So the policy is obviously well implemented but it doesn't mean it's working out well in real life. (D1)*

Group 3

They are Francophones who fail to persevere in the use of their own language, even when circumstances would indicate that they could.

> *If I do not know the person, my reflex is always to try English first. Fortunately the others realize right away that I am a Francophone, because of my very French name, and this sometimes avoids conversations in English with people who speak French very well. Even when I know that a client understands French, my service to the public reflex generally encourages me to communicate as far as possible in my client's preferred language. On the other hand, when I am the person requesting it, I often try to have service in French. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

> *Very often. I may be generalizing, but I suppose that is a fault that we Francophones (Franco-Ontarians) have. Rather than asking for services in French and/or encouraging our colleagues to speak in their second language, we adapt to them by speaking or replying in English.* [unofficial translation] *Again, I guess it's a question of expediency. (Group F1)*

> *Having worked mostly with English speakers before, I seem to have developed the reflex of working in English (memorandums, E-mail, etc...), but I think that in general in meetings I do 50-50. (Group K1)* [unofficial translation]

Group 4

The fourth group is exclusively Francophone and may be the most disruptive group to the policy. Under the guise of protecting the sanctity and purity of the French language, they mercilessly and unrelentingly attack the form of the French expression rather than its content.

> *I believe that anglophones are more tolerant of francophones trying to speak english then visa-versa. I actually know of an incident where an anglophone was trying to speak french to the best of her ability, and was laughed at because of it. It makes you scared to practice your french, because nobody likes being laughed at or made fun of. (Group I1)*

> *My work unit does not provide services to the public. The department provides its services in both languages, at least in the region where we are. By the way, there are errors in French in the question... (Group E1)* [unofficial translation]

> *Even though the Ottawa region is designated as bilingual, the facts are quite different. All meetings take place in English, my supervisor speaks to me only in English, and in the 15 years I have been working here, I have never had access to a pay clerk who could speak French. Often the tools in French, on the Web for example, are of poor quality. (Group E1)* [unofficial translation]

> *I work more in French than in English. Having said that, I would like to make a point that is important: speaking and writing good French. Here I cannot simply blame the government and its language policies. It seems to me that the subject is more profound than that. What is needed is social re-education. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

Evidently, these employee categories appear to be an irreducible part of the problem.

An alternative segmentation of participants exists, offered as a basis for understanding some of the apparent barriers to forward movement on official languages, and a painting of some areas of "common ground" toward which Treasury Board Secretariat communications may strive. It should be taken as a given that the perspective described here is predicated on the assumption that both Anglophones and Francophones will have to be entreated to "move", to compromise, and consider changes to their perspectives of the official languages issue. It is also presumed here that this movement is required as well from public servants who are bilingual, and who otherwise may be adhering to the letter of the Official Languages Act. Finally, it is also presumed here that a shift in the values, which may be what is necessary, is only possible with a certain segment of public servants. Our findings postulate a certain qualitative segmentation of participants, those who are "converted", those who are "unconvertible" and a "malleable middle."

The "**unconvertible**", in our analysis, present a set of generally recognizable characteristics:

- They tend to be most prominent among public servants who have had comparatively little exposure to the "other" linguistic group;
- They tend to perceive the official language policy to be an "imposition", originating in Ottawa, and reflective of a centrist, political concern that they either do not recognize or do not see as important;
- In keeping with the above, adherence to the letter and the spirit of the Official Languages Act is a matter of institutional more than personal relevance. They tend to see the stakes involved mostly in light of non-compliance, and mostly as a matter of avoiding sanction.
- They tend to describe themselves in a manner that would suggest that they themselves feel incapable of responding to the demands of the policy,

especially in the common case where these demands appear exaggerated or excessive.

In opposition to this group, there is clearly a large swath of participants who would appear "**converted**", if only by dint of their personal attitudes and behavior. These individuals can be recognized by virtue of:

- A tendency to see the Official Languages Act and its regulations more as an opportunity than an imposition, and while these individuals may not necessarily be bilingual, they most certainly would describe this ability as an asset, and be more open to becoming so;
- Generally, their conceptualization of the spirit of the legislation and the policy would place notions such as respect, tolerance and accommodation over other matters;
- As a group, these individuals would demonstrate clear and tangible concern for the comfort level in their working environment, and place a premium on good working relationships. Tellingly, however, these individuals would also recognize clear boundaries in this sense, and would concede the existence of a point where the assertion of language would have to supersede the comfort of other individuals or the group;
- Generally speaking, these individuals would recognize a personal, as well as an organizational and institutional imperative in compliance with the policy.
- Finally, these individuals would see no incompatibilities between the aims of the legislation, their own values, and their own ultimate ability to comply. To be sure, this presumes individuals who see the specific demands of the policy as reasonable, and at least attainable to some degree for them personally. As a group, they tend to be concentrated in areas where the proportion of both linguistic communities are relatively balanced, or at least where the "other" group presents a "critical mass".

The "***uncommitted middle***", or those that would present the greatest propensity to respond to communications on official language are those that fall somewhere between these two poles of attitude about official language. They would tend to congregate in areas where there is less balance or proportion between the linguistic groups, they would tend to greater ignorance about the letter and the spirit of the legislation (but otherwise present a certain degree of openness to its tenets), and be open to suggestion about how the aims of the policy are defined.

6.0 Broad Changes And Strategies

From a communications and strategy development perspective, it is possible to consider the most important variables in this official language "equation", and recognize situations where these combine as a means of identifying the most pressing communication target. This would, by definition, describe groups of individuals that:

- Adhere to the characteristics of the "uncommitted middle" described above;
- Have an exaggerated sense of the demands imposed by the legislation, generally as a result of contact with and influence by his or her peers;
- Do not, probably because of a failure to consider the notion, recognize any compatibility between their personal values and the aims of the legislation. This in turn has likely contributed to a sense that the stakes here are more institutional than personal.
- Have very ambiguous, unformed and unclear sense of what the end-goal, spirit or aims of the policy are, either for their immediate environment or the whole of the public service;
- Tend to believe that their personal ability to meet the demands of the legislation are insufficient, either because of their sense of their own limitations, or because of their sense that the demands are too great.

The strategy being proposed here is predicated on the view that Treasury Board Secretariat can, and should communicate more, and more effectively about the letter and most importantly, the spirit of the legislation to this group. Failure to do so, at least for these individuals, represents an abdication of potential influence over the issue, and how this group aligns itself. It seems clearest of all, in retrospect, that the distinguishing characteristic between those who would willingly comply with the policy and those who would not is the degree to which they have internalized the aims of the policy. In this light, ignorance or misperceptions about this aspect of official languages represents an obvious communication objective, and one that will likely produce results.

On the same note, it is also apparent that other groups of public servants are failing to "come onboard" simply because they have internalized an exaggerated sense

of the demands of the policy, compared these to their own limited means, and concluded that there is no reasonable chance of complying. It was both fascinating and discouraging to note how insidious this dynamic was in the discussions: few people voiced this perspective openly, but it was nonetheless apparent that many participants consider the prospect of speaking the other language something that is beyond their reach. When this is the perceived end-goal of the policy, the magnitude of this barrier increases correspondingly.

Additionally, this process has illustrated that perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes surrounding official languages vary between two extremes, and that these extremes are rendered most tangible in light of how the stakes are defined. For some, the stakes are enormous, and can be equated with things such as cultural imperatives and the respect of national identities. At this end of the spectrum, and given the corresponding sense that there are systemic and ingrained barriers at hand, it is not surprising that many are preoccupied with visible indications of progress or non-compliance, and quick to seek out formal redress when they perceive problems. At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who see only "political" stakes at hand here, who see the imperatives as evocative of almost foreign imperatives and realities. In this light, we should not be surprised that we have encountered such resentment from people who adhere to this point of view.

Ultimately, then, it seems essential that the focus of communications surrounding the Official Languages Act and its aims should be on bringing people between these two extremes onto common ground. In everything we have heard, this common ground seems pitted against the immutable sense of personal abilities embodied in all of those who feel that they will never come into compliance with the act unless they are fluently bilingual, and against the impossibly immense gravity of notions like cultural survival or linguistic rights. While imposing and impressive, our discussions suggest that these are indeed two important pillars in this issue, and that communications that fail to account for these will be inadequate to the task. The following section provides some, albeit limited insight on how this may be approached.

6.1 Communication Strategies

Based on the results and findings of this research, and moving forward with the premises and perspectives established so far in this report, we can point to several "axes" of communication that collectively may form the basis for future Treasury Board Secretariat communications.

Axis 1: Defining the "Ideal" Official Language Work Environment

Very clearly, participants in all of our focus groups are far from a consensus point of view on what the end goal of the policy is, or how they might describe an "ideal" official languages working environment. The more formed of these visions extend across a spectrum between a fully bilingual public service to a more practical, limited vision of a functionally or passively bilingual public service. (Acknowledging as well the perspective of the unconvertible who would like to see the whole question of language dropped!). The ambiguity that exists in this sense, however, is apparently the source of much impediment. Without this commonly described and acknowledged vision of the end-goal, collective progress is hampered simply because it voids any possibility of common measures of progress or understanding. In such an absence, it is unavoidable that participants look to the complaint process, as the absence of such complaint is arguably the only standard for progress that can be considered tangible. Moreover, some aspects of each of these extremities are incompatible with the aims, policies and procedures of the employer: if the goal is ultimately to make everyone bilingual, then it does not stand to reason that the employer would see fit to restrict access to language training. In the same vein, paying individuals for being bilingual when they are not in fact required to use the second language is arguably incompatible with the end goal of a functionally bilingual public service.

Keeping in mind, then, that this environment would change shape and flavor according to just about any of the variables we have described so far, we can point to the following as a starting point for developing messages specific to each target group:

For Francophones, we may postulate that some progress may be achieved to the extent that Treasury Board Secretariat can influence how they recognize compliance. It seems clear that redressing the impression (apparent, but not overt in our discussions) that progress is not being made unless the English-speaking are in fact able to speak French is a good place to start. **The spirit of "passive" bilingualism**, where everyone is minimally able to accommodate meetings, transactions, communiqués, and so on in the other language **is one definitive aspect of a common, consensus-based vision of an ideal official language environment**. In short, most everyone concedes that this would be a good thing. More importantly, moving Francophones toward the view that this end-vision is compatible with their sense of the stakes would likely do much to attenuate the environment in general. It seems equally likely that such a vision may constitute a promising challenge to how some see the actual mechanism for the protection of language, culture and the respect of cultural identity.

By the same token, it seems clear as well that some Francophones need to be reminded that their failure to assert *their own right to self-expression in their language* can be ultimately self-defeating. In the simplest terms, the required messages here may be to say to French-speaking public servants that being *heard* and understood in their own language is enough, but that they must in fact exercise this right.

Finally, this sort of messaging, it must be said, contradicts a system that defines compliance in the workplace around the notion of "active offer". While this notion may be adequate and even necessary in the context of language of service, it should be recognized that it has the effect of raising *impressions* of the standards and measures of compliance to the level of insisting that everyone speak the other language. If, on the other hand, the end-goal is *passive* bilingualism, then efforts should be made to attenuate anyone's reflex to complain if the person from the "other" community does not address them in their language.

For Anglophones, it seems clear that much more work needs to be done, if only because it is in this community that the most ambiguity exists around the idea of what the policy expects of them. Accordingly, it seems clear that messaging should focus on establishing clearer, and more attainable, measures of progress, and at the same time, raising awareness of how important progress toward these goals is. The standard of passive bilingualism defined above, as an example, would be productive in this sense. While many indicate that active bilingualism is beyond their reach, the goal of learning to hear and understand the other language is much less so. With this said, however, this standard clearly must be considered important, and seen in a light commensurate with the level of the stakes for the other community.

Finally, Treasury Board Secretariat should consider that the articulation of messages in this sense should account for the geographical and demographic variables described earlier in this light.

Axis 2: Redress Misperceptions about the Breadth and Demands of the Policy

The simplest, and yet possibly one of the more important communications tasks that Treasury Board Secretariat should undertake is simply to inform public servants about the policy, and particularly the policy as it relates to language of work. While the subject of language of service is only partially understood, we have encountered a lot more confusion and lack of clarity surrounding the issue of language of work. In addition, this confusion increases with distance, so that the imperative to clarify and explain *grows* rather than diminishes in areas that are not declared bilingual for language of work. This is because public servants in these areas, while not exposed to the same level of demand, nonetheless contribute to "conventional wisdom" about the topic. Moreover, the lack of specific information about the topic allows these less interested (and often recalcitrant) voices to define the terms of reference in the issue. Otherwise, we also see clear evidence that insufficient knowledge of participants can cause confusion between the provisions for language of service and language of work. One of the most visible instances of this confusion is the sense from several participants that the sanctions that apply for failure to meet the provisions of service can apply to language of work.

Axis 3: Clearer Standards in Hierarchical Communications

Passive bilingualism, presented as a component part of the ideal language of work environment works only in the context of peer-to-peer communications. While it may appear to participants to be a workable practice for meetings, written communications and the like, it obviously cannot play the same role in *hierarchical* communications. In these instances, defined here as any communication of an official capacity between two different levels of an organizational hierarchy, the onus must be placed on the person at the higher level to speak in the language of the person at the lower level. While this is arguably already a principle built into the official language policy, it nonetheless stands out as a principle that few participants fully understand.

The confusion or lack of clarity around this principle – and the fact that more people intuit its presence than recognize it in an overt fashion constitutes a significant obstacle to forward progress. This obstacle is manifest in many of the comments and attitudes we encountered, but particularly in the resentment many participants expressed about how their chances for promotion *felt* circumscribed by their language abilities. In keeping with many patterns described to date, this resentment appears to grow with distance from the "other" community. We see evidence that the ambiguity itself is the source of fear and anxiety, to the extent that participants' anxiety is well founded, but not rendered explicit.

This ambiguity should clearly constitute a major target for the Treasury Board Secretariat's communication activities, as it stands to reason that there is nothing wrong with this principle save for the fact that it is not widely and fully understood. In our discussions, it was apparent that the frustrations and anxieties surrounding this notion were more attributable to its lack of clarity than lack of moral or organizational grounding. Generally, most participants will concede the notion that *delivery* in the other language increases in importance and good sense as the authority of the communicator increases.

Axis 4: Consistent Application and Open Procedure

Finally, and as a matter of principle as much as an axis of communication, we cannot do justice to the perspective of participants without pointing out that many feel that the implementation of the policy lacks transparency and consistency in some important respects. The two most prominent examples of this have to do with the bilingual bonus, and the business of designating the language requirements of positions.

- The bonus, for its part, is decried whenever it is paid to people who either do not appear to have the proficiency it suggests, or more importantly, when the beneficiary fails to use the language. This latter example is even more troubling (and described in a manner that would suggest it's fairly common) in hierarchical situations.

The process of attributing language requirements to job postings is problematic to the extent that the motives for declaring a staffing action to be "imperative" or "essential" is often obscure to bystanders. This suggests that a clear set of standards is required, or, if they exist, that they be communicated more clearly. We also need to point out that we heard many participants speak of instances where the posting or the standard of proficiency was manipulated to ensure that a given person could get the job. These sorts of practices clearly degrade participants' overall buy-in to the policy, to say nothing of their trust in the system.

7.0 Specific Changes

We asked participants in these sessions their reactions to possible actions aimed at establishing more equitable language use in the workplace: improving training and resources, modifying the application of the bilingualism bonus, increasing the use of imperative staffing, and instituting an information campaign aimed at changing attitudes.

7.1 Improve Official Languages Training & Resources

As mentioned previously, increasing the resources — including training — available for Official Languages seems to many participants a "sine qua non" for its more successful implementation.

> *I agree with (...), there are some employes in our unit who have asked to go on language training since the first year they started here and have not been given that opportunity, some for as long as 13 years. (Group I1)*

> *As I have mentioned throughout we need access to training. I am relatively new to the federal government (2.5 years)and I would like to continue working for the federal government. However, I have almost reached my professional ceiling and if I don't become bilingual in the next couple of years I will be forced to look elsewhere for employment. As I keep reading that the federal government is looking at a huge human resources shift in the next 5 years they will need to be able to retain and attract as many people as possible. In order to do this I think they need to look at how they determine the need for bilingual positions and be ready to increase access to training for those of us that wish to become bilingual. A happy employee is a productive employee. (Group I1)*

An alternative noted by at least one participant was a pro-active program that would identify bilingualism candidates in advance of their actual needs.

> *Interesting as a principle, provided that bilingualism does not become compulsory in all positions. For bilingual positions there should be an MMOP-type program (Middle Management Orientation Program). People are trained for management, why not for bilingualism when this is necessary? (Bilingualism should naturally lead to promotions) (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

> *The employer should promote second-language learning if it is unable to meet the work requirements in a single language. For example, I work for (...)X in a building next door to the National Defence language school (this school teaches the second language to senior Canadian dignitaries). Several times in the past we*

> *have asked our managers to have access to this teaching institution. "It's National Defence, so it's impossible". National Defence's money comes from the pockets of Canadian taxpayers, so if it has a resource that is useful to the entire Canadian public service, why are there these administrative limits, especially when we are hearing so much about administrative horizontality? (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

Participants noted that gaining a language skill (particularly for Anglophones learning French) is but a small part of the battle: keeping the newly acquired skill appears to be a battle all its own, often a losing battle.

> *Yes, but the context in the West is certainly quite different, as P... says. On the other hand, even though these people make very little use of it, they must remain bilingual by finding mechanisms to make them practice if they really want to: television (TV5), French films, newspapers, etc. That can be considered a shared responsibility (government and the employee) to fulfil commitments made earlier. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

It seems clear that there needs to be a review of the practices to ensure that those who gain another official language are able to use it sufficiently to maintain the skills. It might be, at minimum, a requirement that Treasury Board Secretariat provides a FAQ on keeping your language skills.

> *If an employer is trying to create a work environment that is bilingual, they need to committ the time and resources to do this. If the federal government hopes to attract and retain qualified individuals, whom many are not bilingual, they will need to ensure that there is ample opportunities for career advancement. By imposing a professional ceiling based on language and not providing opportunities for training during office time, many qualified individuals will be lost. (Group I1)*

> *For me it is important to dwell on the needs of public servants in relation to the language. Encourage public servants to learn their second language. By creating, I don't know, a department that would be able to give training, or putting people in positions to replace public servants leaving on training..... But is that realistic?... If they revise the policy by simply changing the formulation without really making the efforts necessary for change, people will not take part in all that. In my view that is like replacing red apples with green apples... Just playing on words... I think it is up to us to learn and to the Department to provide the means and the possibility to do so. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

7.2 Bilingual Bonus

Increase, Reduce, Or Eliminate

Across these sessions, participants consider the bilingualism bonus as a reward (or recognition) rather than as an incentive.

> *I do not think that $800 is an incentive for EX-1, -2, etc., managers who have salaries of over $... Even for me, a unilingual French researcher, I will not go to a lot of trouble to try and get another $400 net. The money should not be considered an incentive, but rather a reward. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

The bilingual bonus is likely to prove a Gordian knot of conflicting opinions and attitudes. Nonetheless, it seems appropriate to review what is likely a major expenditure, which might profitably be diverted to other uses, including (for instance) refresher courses. It may be appropriate for Treasury Board Secretariat to review the current practice with a view to effecting a systematic replacement of these monies with training dollars and resources, perhaps geared to those who have received, cumulatively, the smallest amounts from the language bonus.

> *What is the real reason for having bilingual positions? It is not to hand out bonuses. I consider the bonus a form of recognition of my proficiency. Unfortunately, the public service is very limited from the point of view of a manager who wants to reward the members of his work team. Would there be other more appropriate forms of reward? (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

If the bonus is but a badge - a tangible badge, but a badge nonetheless - are there alternatives that would serve to confirm an employee's achievement?

> *Until last week I occupied a unilingual French position. However, for nearly a year I have never written a report in French. I find it ridiculous that positions like mine are designated French-language because, sincerely, there is almost no demand for our services only in French. I think that the idea of a bonus ($800, or $16 gross per pay) is simply a method used by the federal government to show that it is encouraging the use of both languages. However, as a number of people have said, this bonus is not worth much.... (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

There is support for the position that the bilingualism bonus should be removed and the savings spent on increased training.

> *I don't see the language bonus as being that much of an inducement to seek a bilingual position. I would support getting rid of it and spending the money on training more people. (Group D1)*

> *I think that we must take the bilingualism requirement into account in our work, but perhaps the bilingualism bonus is outdated (Group E1)* [unofficial translation]

Some participants feel that the bonus paid should be a reflection of the level attained.

> *I would tie the elimination of the bilingualism bonus to the proficiency required to apply for bilingual positions, probably at the mid-level of a group, such as PM 04; AS 04; ES 04, etc... My reasoning is that we begin our careers at the bottom of the scale and take language training. To rise, we must demonstrate proficiency in the second language, and more proficiency and experience for higher positions. (Group F1)* [unofficial translation]

7.3 Pay Based On Usage

Another option proposed to participants was that the bilingualism bonus be made payable depending on usage.

Although participants generally endorse the principle, they doubted that the mechanics would prove amenable to operationalization.

> *I know that this is an option that is currently being considered. I believe that there are pros and cons. In general, it is a very good idea, but it could also have a negative effect at the entry levels. It could prevent bilingual new recruits from accessing bilingual positions upon entry. It could also prevent unilingual recruits from accessing bilingual non-imperative positions and becoming bilingual; that would be contrary to the spirit of the Official Languages Act and policies, and to the government's interest. In any case, I agree that the system of bilingualism bonuses should be reviewed. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

> *I think there is a difference between real bilingualism and bilingualism on paper. I know individual who have a hard time getting there CCC and once they have it, don't even utilize their new skill. I believe the language bonus is a good idea, but it should reflect the reality. If you are an individual who does not utilize both*

languages at work, then you should not get the bonus, or not at the same level has someone who use both languages quite frequently doing the course of the day. So I recommend that there be a level, let's say, $500 to $2000. (Group F1)

I suppose, but this would be difficult to administer. How would someone be able to verify how much of my time is spent working in any given language? Even if it were done on the honour system, it would be an estimate at best. (Group K1)

It seems clear that the bonus should be the focus of a review.

7.4 Job Classifications

Anglophone participants, especially, wonder at the number of positions designated as having a second-language component.

The only reservation I have is that there may be too many 'designated' bilingual positions. For instance, where an employee does not deal with the public, I don't see why those positions be designated in a bilingual area...when we look at lack of recruitment in the Public Service, this policy may be attributing to it. I know of many people who would like to work for the federal government, but can not get jobs because they are unilingual. (Group F1)

Eliminate the current system of bilingualism bonuses and replace it with a scoring system (that takes into account the degree of use of the second language: speaking, reading and writing) in the position descriptions. The additional cost impact is less visible, and this scoring can help obtain an increase in the level of the position a person occupies. (Group J1) [unofficial translation]

7.5 Imperative Staffing

As might be expected, there is a range of opinions expressed regarding imperative staffing. Some participants — Francophones primarily, it seems — feel that imperative staffing might be one solution.

Why not have promotions in which bilingualism is essential, not in two years but as soon as the person occupies the position? Even that would demand an iron will on the part of managers and the government, not to relax on this point. Thus people wanting those promotions would have to work at it ahead of time to become bilingual. (Group J1) [unofficial translation]

> *I am in favour of using imperative staffing more: that might encourage people to take language training more so as to prepare for promotions. On the other hand, the tools must come along with that: access to training, and easier mobility, to make it easier for someone to go from Quebec to occupy a bilingual position in the Prairies, for example. If we do not have the tools, we will wind up with an English-speaking public service and unfilled bilingual imperative positions; that would run counter to what we would like. (Group J1)* [unofficial translation]

Anglophones do not, however.

> *Being in a bilingual city, in a bilingual province, it is very important that our offices provide adequate service in both languages. It does pose a problem when it comes to staffing which has usually been bilingual imperative. No room for training in the scheme. (Group F1)*

> *I agree with (...) on her last point. We should first determine whether or not a person meets the education, experience, knowledge, abilities, etc. of the position and if they are not bilingual, send them on language training. (Group I1)*

Some participants argued forcibly that whatever policy changes are considered, the required support must be provided lest policy changes inadvertently work against the intended goals.

APPENDIX

A Hierarchy Of Recommendations

We have categorized below some recommendations (and attempted to prioritize them) into those which are simple implications (Caveat), those that are likely to affect a current public service Process, Research steps, Information transmission, and provision of Tools and Support. We have also coded each recommendation according to our estimation of the likely difficulties in implementation (low, medium, and high) and the potential benefits of success (low, medium, and high).

Sorting by category provides the following additional thoughts:

- The caveats (numbers 1, 10, 17, 21, 39, and 51) confirm that there are obstacles to a more successful implementation of the policy, and that expectations must be realistic and patient in view of the resource environment
- Information transmission in various forms appears to be required and could be effected at low cost. The information elements include correcting misconceptions (3), publicizing the different training policies (7) and satisfaction levels (18) at departments and agencies, re-iteration of the "bilingualism-friendly" theme to employees (9), providing and publicizing summaries on the various policies (11, 15, 16, 36, 42) appear to be "low-hanging" fruit: low impact but low cost strategies.
- Information measures that attempt to effect attitude change ("Information2") have been coded as inherently more difficult or costly to implement. Because the credibility of the message will be at issue, these campaigns would have greater believability if accompanied by resources. The campaigns include establishing a clearinghouse of solutions (13), effecting attitude change in managers (28), promoting official languages (40) and multiculturalism (50), and language training (5), and developing a "missionary" logo (30).
- The difficulty of changing existing processes varies. High-difficulty items included the bilingual bonus (45, 47, 48). Mid-range changes would include establishing a bureau of temporary bilingual help (43), instituting department-specific measures (38) perhaps including "turnaround CEOs" (24), implementing more frequent currency testing (8), and attempting to identify employee language requirements in advance of their need (37). Low-cost actions include desk reviews of information flows about the Act (2), the Champions programme (4), job language requirements definition (49), and the role of the Central agencies (26); establishing a separate entity within Treasury Board Secretariat to promote Official Languages in the workplace (27); fostering virtual work teams (31) and "missionaries" (33); and,

implementing a re-integration program for those returning from language training (44).

- The Research category could include desk research, qualitative research, and surveys to investigate providing more tools in their first language to public servants (20), soliciting the opinions of seniors executives (25b), listing and further analysing these recommendations (29), identifying missionaries (32) work teams (34 and 19), and other best practices (35), developing and conducting regular surveys on employee language satisfaction (18a).
- It seems clear that providing resources will be essential to the success of the rejuvenated policy, whether generally (41), for training (6), by pairing DMs with Ministers of different languages (25), or moving some key department headquarters to a Francophone city (25a).
- Finally, there are specific Tools that can be provided to employees, including an enhanced PCIS (14), snitch lines (22), technological translators (23), and unilingual solutions to bilingual problems (12).

Number	Statement	Category	Implementation Cost/Difficulty	Potential Benefit
1	It may be unreasonable to expect significant improvement in the implementation of the Official Languages policy until the Public Sector manages to achieve a better balance between work requirements and available resources.	Caveat	n/a	n/a
2	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to review how well managers themselves are made aware of various government policies, including that on Official Languages, and how well they, in turn, transmit that information to the employees that they supervise.	Process	low	low
3	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to distil and encapsulate the various aspects of the policy so that employees can maintain a reasonably correct understanding of the policy. There may be a need, for instance, to develop and publicize an information resource (brochure or FAQ) concerning the most common misconceptions.	Information	low	medium
4	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to review the effectiveness of the Languages Champions programme.	Process	low	low
5	Current attitudes to language training do not reveal a positive mindset and Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider efforts to change the attitudes to language training. Similarly, other suggestions (an emphasis on proactive training, on training interested candidates, on training for language-of-work purposes) might also help change what may be a negative attitude towards training and the Official Languages policy.	Information2	medium	medium
6	Treasury Board Secretariat and government departments should encourage employees to take courses that upgrade their language skills according to the same criteria that departments use for other work-related courses. That is, Treasury Board Secretariat should consider language training in the second official language to be work-related, regardless of the incumbent position's language profile.	Resources	high	high
7	The NHLPA, the National Hockey League Player Association, publishes the compensation of all players to provide players with competitive intelligence in their bargaining. Treasury Board Secretariat might consider publishing the various departmental policies regarding language training so that employees could determine how well their current home department fares against others and whether their long-term interest, insofar as language and language training are concerned, might best be served elsewhere.	Information	low	medium

8	If only to maximize returns from investments in language training, Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to implement more frequent and more recurring currency testing.	Process	medium	medium
9	Treasury Board Secretariat should continue to stress that the public service is "bilingualism-friendly", particularly at higher levels, and particularly in bilingual regions; career windows will be open longer and wider for those with a good knowledge of both official languages.	Information	low	low
10	It seems clear that some segments of the employees have no stake in the success of the policy or the Act and will resist its implementation. For some Anglophones, for instance, the policy may be seen as ineffective pandering to whining sore losers with scarce government funds. For some Francophones, by contrast, any failure of the policy is insulting evidence of their continued victimization by an uncaring and disrespectful majority.	Caveat	n/a	n/a
11	There may be a need to provide employees with a simplified version of the policy that will help guide their actions and expectations.	Information	low	low
12	The "buddy" system already in place in some departments might profitably be implemented by others. The use of various remote technologies (live chats, telephone, call centres, teleconferences, videoconferencing, desktop videoconferencing, etc.) could also provide departments with the ability to transcend geography in providing comparable services across the country in the official language of choice.	Tools	medium	medium
13	There seems to be a need for Treasury Board Secretariat to either clarify policy implementation points or to ensure that these clarifications are made easily available to public servants. As government and citizens move increasingly online in their transactions, such clarifications will become increasingly necessary. This migration to the virtual world may necessitate a review of all geography-based regulations, since transactions and work teams, to give but two examples will increasingly become virtual. The very technology that may make geography a secondary concern may also be the technology that allows solutions. Given the examples of other departments and the availability of telecommunications tools, it would seem desirable for Treasury Board Secretariat to provide a centralized clearinghouse of possible solutions to problem situations, a "Dear Abby" resource for employees and Official Languages consultants that would provide instant advice on	Information2	medium	low

	problem situations.			
14	These findings suggest that the service to the public aspect of the law is well understood and reasonably well delivered. Further, departments with a public-service mandate will be exposed to successful efforts to meet this aspect of Official Languages. In turn, use of Official Language resources and bilingual employees might encourage greater use of both languages for work in these departments. If correct, this hypothesis suggests that it might prove useful for executives to gain exposure to departments that do have a public-service element so that they can appreciate and experience a more equitable official language workplace. This suggests the need for centralized planning tools across the public service, for instance, an enhancement to the PCIS tool to enable the identification and tracking of suitable candidates.	Tools	low	low
15	There seems to be a requirement to provide a clear and concise statement of this policy and its possible impact on departments and employees.	Information	low	low
16	There appears to be a need to familiarize employees with the policy and its likely impact on their department's activities.	Information	low	low
17	There remain obstacles to a fuller understanding of the Official Languages policy as it concerns the language of work.	Caveat	n/a	n/a
18	One wonders whether the results of biennial surveys on employee language use satisfaction (mentioned in another recommendation) might be made public. In this way, potential employees might have more pertinent information available to make employment decisions, and current employees might realize more fully that any dissatisfactions might be shared - and hence could be acted upon.	Information	low	medium
18a	Biennial surveys on employee language use satisfaction	Research	medium	medium
19	Treasury Board Secretariat should undertake a search for best practices to find and study any work teams where less than bilingual team members are still able to function effectively.	Research	medium	medium
20	In certain instances, it may prove more effective and efficient to change behaviour before changing attitudes. To that end, we suggest that Treasury Board Secretariat study the implications of requiring departments to automatically provide public servants with the required tools in their first official language, with a "negative option" to request work tools in the other language. This would help to diffuse French-language tools and hopefully lead immediately to greater equity by	Research	low	high

	encouraging Francophones to use French by providing easier access to French tools. This approach would probably require (as recommended elsewhere) a more responsive PCIS.			
21	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider that despite advances over the past years, there may be now limited belief in and support for improvement measures.	Caveat	n/a	n/a
22	Being part of the team and working towards a common goal are powerful inhibitors. Despite an apparently greater willingness on the part of some employees to exercise their rights, Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider establishing - for want of a better term - "snitch lines" to allow employees to point out departmental or governmental shortcomings in an anonymous fashion, and hence not subject to either peer or official pressure.	Tools	low	low
23	Treasury Board Secretariat should continue to explore technological solutions to the issue of interface between different "operating languages" (including automatic translators; Babel Fish (http://babelfish.altavista.com/) rendered the initial sentence in this paragraph as "Treasury Board Secretariat devrait continuer à explorer les solutions technologiques à la question d'interface entre différents " langages de fonctionnement.").	Tools	low	high
24	In business, the 90's saw the development and proliferation of "turnaround specialists", CEOs who would be hired specifically for their ability to improve the fiscal performance of an ailing company. Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider the establishment of a core of senior managers modeled on turnaround specialists. These flying squads would have had a positive experience in establishing a positive official languages work experience (in addition to success in the other aspects of senior management, of course) and would become experts in the language turnaround of departments and agencies).	Process	medium	medium
25	It seems clear that senior management and Ministers have a preponderant role to play in the day-to-day implementation of the policy, and it seems equally clear that Treasury Board Secretariat - were it able to have an impact with this audience - might achieve "bang for the buck". In addition to soliciting DMs and Ministers for their views on how best to achieve a buy-in (an initiative that we understand has already been effected by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages), we wonder whether a "buddy"	Process	Low	High

	system might not be implemented so that, for instance, Ministers might be paired with Deputies who are of the other language group.			
25a	In the same vein, there may be other initiatives that would see, for instance, the installation in a thoroughly francophone community (Quebec City, for instance) of one or more headquarters of a government department. This move would have the advantage of providing senior management with the opportunity to use and practice their French. A similar move might be envisaged in a western city for Francophone executives.	Resources	high	high
25b	Soliciting DMs	Research	low	medium
26	It seems evident that in some respects, departments and Treasury Board Secretariat itself have failed to implement the policy as it should be. The result is likely to be lack of belief in the policy and, more importantly, a lack of respect for it. Treasury Board Secretariat and the other players in the Official Languages industry must themselves rethink their approach and their self-perception. Are they watchdogs and police? Or are supposed to be enhancing equitable language use?	Process	Low	medium
27	Specifically, we must wonder whether the current mandate of Treasury Board Secretariat can be accomplished when both functions - promotion and policing - appear to be vested in the same administrative entity. We suggest that what is required now is a different way of thinking about the issues, a mindset that will favour promotion over policing. Promoting values cannot, in our experience, be achieved without the willingness to risk new approaches, and such risk taking assumes the willingness to fail. We suspect that Treasury Board Secretariat is currently too concerned with enforcing and respecting its own many and often labyrinthine policies to be able to accept the risk taking inherent in changing attitudes. We therefore suggest that separate entities be created, if they do not exist, with separate mandates - one for policing and the other for promotion of Official Languages policies as language of work.	Process	Low	medium
28	One lesson that managers may need to learn (or re-learn) is that employees will have an easier and more productive life if they can work in their language of choice.	Information2	medium	low
29	We would suggest that a first step would be to itemize the suggestions listed throughout this report, whether listed as implications or in the citations from participants, and to rank them on likely costs and impacts, the better to select which	Research	low	low

	should be implemented (or at least debated and tested) first, particularly if there are "low-hanging" fruit to be picked. Promote inter-departmental brainstorming and facilitate exchanges and implementation of these ideas.			
30	One wonders whether the creation of an overt sign - the equivalent of the Official Language logo - could be developed and promoted as an indication that the speaker is fluently bilingual and willing to assist others with their second language practice. The sign could be verbal or a pin.	Information2	medium	low
31	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider fostering the implementation of virtual work teams that would bring together departmental employees from various departments.	Process	low	low
32	It seems clear from these sessions that there are areas for improvement. It also seems clear that there are best practices now occurring and "missionaries" who are - or could - "spread the good word" about official languages and their underlying values. Treasury Board Secretariat and other interested departments should conduct research to identify these positive models, to understand them better, to explore why they have come to exist and prosper, and how to promote their proliferation. The "Good" include both missionaries and best practices.	Research	low	medium
33	We believe that these individuals and others like them may be "natural champions", and should be encouraged for embracing the values of multilingualism. This might require the establishment of a functional database of government employees (PCIS with email fields for all government employees) to identify those employees and help them continue their ministry.	Process	low	medium
34	It seems that this provides a starting point for identifying how these employee work teams got started, what makes them bilingual, what makes them successful. More importantly, it seems likely that research could start with them to identify any characteristics that could be exported or migrated to other work teams. For instance, could these work teams, already bilingual, be used as staging points for newly-minted bilingual managers or employees to perfect their skills, and learn to use their second language in a supportive environment? Could these bilingual units be used as refresher stages, to ensure that employees use the language skills that they have worked so hard to acquire?	Research	low	medium
35	There seems to be more research required to isolate departments that exhibit best practices and to identify more precisely how they have come	Research	low	medium

	about and how these practices can be cloned to other organizations.			
36	It would be useful, it seems, to compile these and other practical techniques and approaches into a self-help manual, an "Official Languages for Dummies", and promote it to managers and employees who need them. A bulletin board session with Official Languages coordinators might be warranted; its output could form the basis for such a manual.	Information	low	medium
37	Ideally, it would be most useful to identify, in a systematic way, employees that will require French training, before they need it.	Process	medium	medium
38	In concert with efforts to identify best practices, Treasury Board Secretariat may also wish to target agencies that seem most ripe for a language "takeover". If it is determined, for instance, that small size, and senior management (to name but two variables) interest are two determining factors in equitable language use, Treasury Board Secretariat could work with senior management and Ministers to systematically and measurably improve employee satisfaction in a given agency, using various incentives and resources that Treasury Board Secretariat could bring to bear. In other words, Treasury Board Secretariat would (in addition to its government-wide activities) target agencies with above-average potential with specific measures. These agencies could, in addition, become test-beds for innovative solutions that could be attempted selectively.)	Process	medium	medium
39	Evidently, these employee categories appear to be an irreducible part of the problem.	Caveat	n/a	n/a
40	Possible solutions might include alternative meeting models (buddy systems), but also alternatives: more responsibility for the bilingual members to act as de-facto translators, and a greater ability for them to be fluent in the technical language of their specialty.	Information2	medium	low
41	Treasury Board Secretariat must nurture the policy by lobbying for or providing the resources required to sustain the language of work policy.	Resources	high	high
42	It seems clear that there needs to be a review of the practices to ensure that those who gain another official language are able to use it sufficiently to maintain the skills. It might be, at minimum, a requirement that Treasury Board Secretariat a FAQ on keeping your language skills.	Information	low	low
43	Is there such a thing as a "temporary" bureau within the government... it would also fill the need of helping people practice their other language.	Process	medium	low

44	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to investigate the need for a special "re-integration" program for employees returning from language training. This program might include, for example, private bilingual radio stations, broadcast over streaming audio on the government intranet, with choices of musical styles and specialist content ("The HR Channel", "IT Rap", etc.) to provide employees with specialist vocabulary in both languages.	Process	low	medium
45	The bilingual bonus is likely to prove a Gordian knot of conflicting opinions and attitudes. Nonetheless, it seems appropriate to review what is likely a major expenditure, which might profitably be diverted to other uses, including (for instance) refresher courses. It may be appropriate for Treasury Board Secretariat to review the current practice with a view to effecting a systematic replacement of these monies with training dollars and resources, perhaps geared to those who have received, cumulatively, the smallest amounts from the language bonus.	Process	high	Medium
46	If the bonus is but a badge - a tangible badge, but a badge nonetheless - are there alternatives that would serve to confirm an employee's achievement?	Information2	Medium	High
47	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider an amendment to the bonus that would see it paid at the entry levels but removed as higher levels are attained.	Process	high	Medium
48	It seems clear that the bonus should be the focus of a review.	Process	high	Medium
49	Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to review how and how well language requirements are being defined and incorporated into job requirements.	Process	low	low
50	There may be a need for Treasury Board Secretariat - and other agencies - to give to all employees (and Canadians generally) the "taste" for languages, including the two official ones.	Information2	Medium	medium
51	Treasury Board Secretariat should ensure that any information campaign be backed up with significant support for the policy.	Caveat	n/a	n/a